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HACK THROUGH EVERY LEVEL

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DEFEAT ALL THE BOSSES

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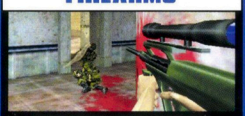

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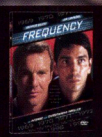

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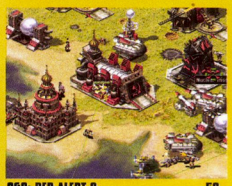
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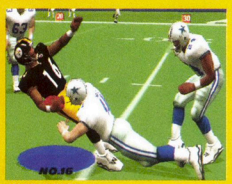
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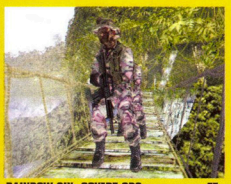
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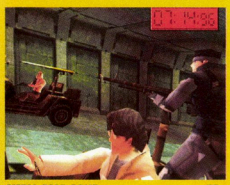
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THE ULTIMATE STRATEGY & TIPS GUIDE 2001

55 Here it is: the best strategy guide ever. We've got everything from *NHL 2001* to *C&C: Red Alert 2*. Get the latest tips for big games such as *Rune*, *Covert Ops*, and *Crimson Skies*, and don't miss the conclusion of our massive two-part *Baldur's Gate II* strategy. Plus: 392 cheats and codes!

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So you've plunked down your hard-earned dollars for the latest game. Where's your cash go now? We follow those pretty little bills as they make their way through the economic system of the gaming industry.

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Sierra is about to unleash the mother of all real-time strategy games. Imagine a game like *Age of Empires II* that covers over 5,000 years of human history, and you'll have an inkling of what Empire Earth is all about.

18 Serious Sam
We've played through a bunch of levels of this intriguing new FPS from Croatian developer Croteam.

23 Sim Coaster
A sequel to *Sim Theme Park* is one the way. All the crazy rides, over-worked janitors, and up-chucking kids are back.

24 Kohan: Immortal Sovereigns
Kohan is sure to provide you with a good-sized hit of real-time strategy in a fantasy world. Check out the preview and find out why this isn't your average RTS.

29 Oni
Get the latest on Bungie's anime-style third-person action game. Hand-to-hand combat on the PC has never looked this good.

Oni, p.29

30 Emperor: Battle for Dune
We've got the lowdown on this gorgeous 3D follow-up to one of the most famous real-time strategy games ever.

www.DailyRadar.com

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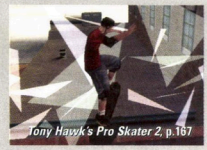

The Hard Stuff

173 We dish out the first-ever Pentium 4 review — tech-heads may begin salivating now. Also, Vederman reviews three new Sound Blaster Live! cards and Microsoft's Strategic Commander.

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34 **Eyewitness**
Michael Crichton gives us an exclusive interview about his new game, *Timeline*. Plus, find out what Blizzard is saying about *WarCraft III*. And check out the latest version of *Ultima Online*. Also, don't forget to enter the *No One Lives Forever* contest for a shot at going to real-life spy school.

196 **Extended Play**
Mr. Morris reminisces about the fun and the horror of *Aliens: Total Conversion* for *Doom*.

198 **The Point After**
Smoke firmly believes that sports-game developers could learn a thing or two from makers of first-person shooters. Find out why.

201 **The Killing Box**
Our own Colin Williamson makes a wish-list of what features he wants to see in future first-person shooters.

204 **Alternate Lives**
How evil is too evil? Wolf examines the nature of villainy in the world of online roleplaying.

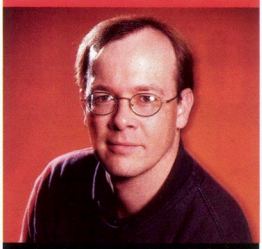
207 **The Desktop General**
Trotter reminds us that there's a big difference between *wargaming* and war.

209 **Sim Column**
In yet another wish-list, Mahood describes the racing sim of his dreams.

212 **Letters**
Readers ask what the *PCG* staff studied in college, and respond to our "Meet the New Game Gods" feature.

216 **Backspace**
The ever-so-shiny Dave Perry is on the block this month.

LETTER FROM THE ED.



"Ray, when someone asks you if you're a god, you say YES!"

Wow, seems our Nov. 2000 cover story, "Meet the New Game Gods," sparked some controversy! Thankfully, most people were able to get past the headline, didn't react with shallow prejudice to the striking cover, and read the real story — the fascinating thoughts of the group.

What can be better for a gamer, a game enthusiast, than to hear the thoughts, mind-set, and focus of the real, honest-to-goodness, well-intentioned folks who actually create the games? Of course, picking out individuals from the talent pool of a team will cause controversy, but we knew each person would contribute valuable comments to the chat.

I certainly want to know what new avenues of creativity are being investigated. Let me know what you think of our features where we get inside the heads of developers. What matters to you in gauging interest in a new project? Is it the potential of a new design direction, or the splicing of a tri-linear–filtered, anti-aliased, ray-traced voxel that floats your boat? Of course, every element is vital to the product, but what's getting you excited? With a wealth of new gaming goodness on the drawing board, I'm curious to hear your thoughts on the projects deserving of the buzz.

On to the monthly quote contest: congrats to Christopher Allen for bringing Dr. Seuss to my mailbox, spotting the line from *X-Files: Fight the Future*. And a happy new year to everyone!

Rob Smith

Rob Smith,
Editor-in-Chief

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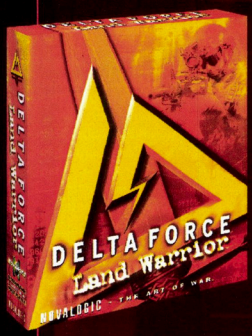

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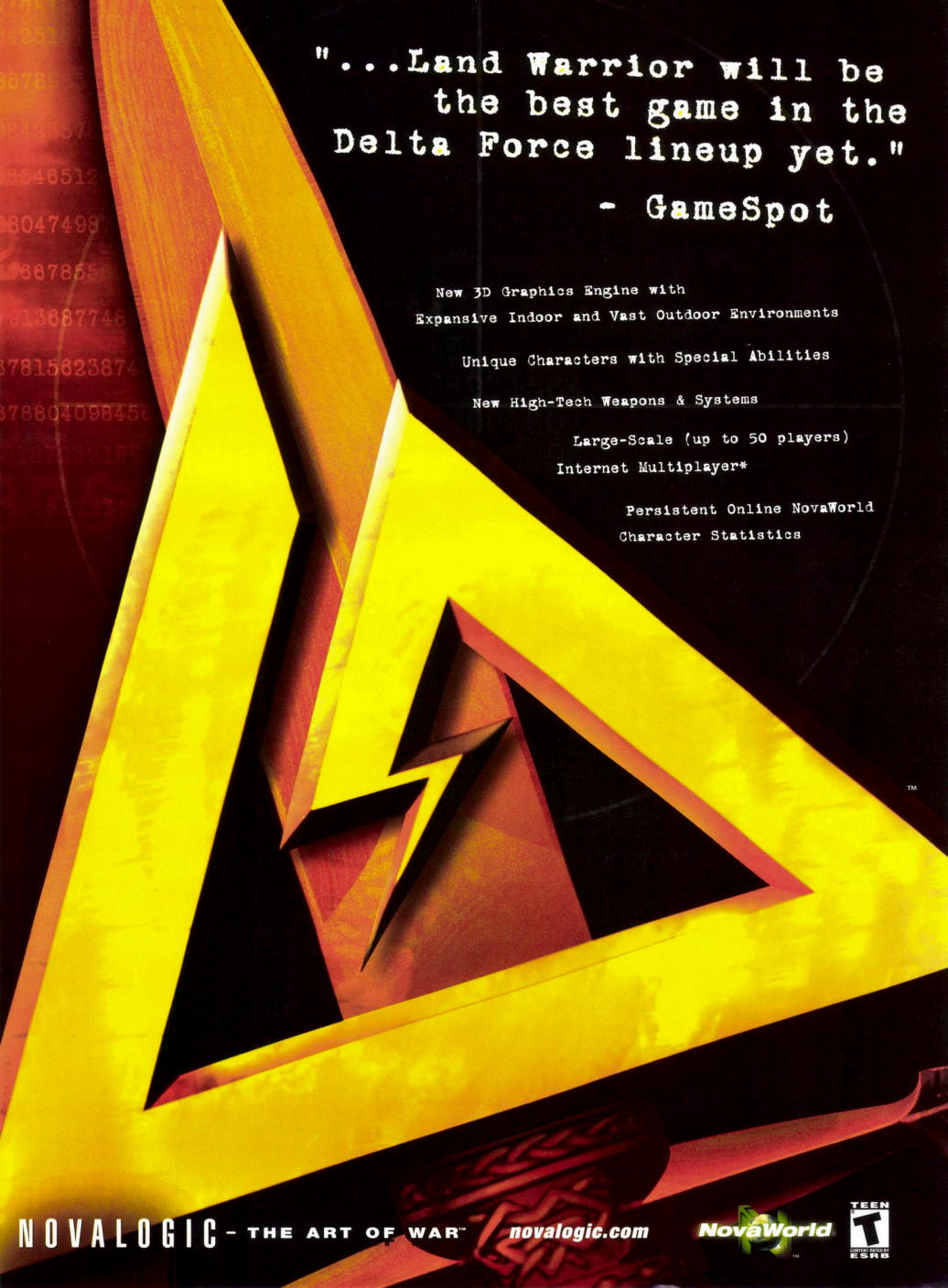
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MONKEYS, KLINGONS, AND POOL CUES

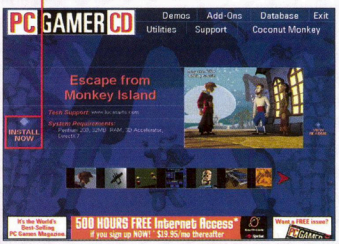
NOT TO MENTION FROGS, PLANES, BALLS, AND CARS. THIS MONTH'S CD IS A GAMING RODEO!

With all this chatter about the death of adventure games, we decided to surprise everyone by featuring the return of one of the best adventure heroes of all time — Guybrush Threepwood — in *Escape from Monkey Island*. If you're an adventure nut, you've already played the demo before opening the magazine. If not, you are sincerely encouraged to check it out. If you don't laugh, you're probably not living.

Also on the disc is the excellent *Crimson Skies*, which is best described as a humorous *Wing Commander* set over land and water in the 1930s. And you'll find *Virtual Pool 3*, the next in the award-winning series of instructional simulations; the gratuitous *Star Trek* title; some driving action; a little turn-based strategy; and a couple of mindless arcade classics that have warped into the 21st century. All in all, a pretty decent catch of gaming goodness.

A small note regarding the disc interface: there is a bug (hopefully fixed next month) that displays a corrupted screen only if you are running Large Fonts. As a temporary workaround, go to Display Properties, choose Settings, click Advanced, and switch to Small Fonts. Or just ignore the interface, and use Windows Explorer.

When you're ready to install the displayed demo, click this button to launch the setup program. It might help to close the interface at this time.



Unfortunately, we can't provide technical support for the games contained on the disc. However, if the disc itself is scratched or defective, you can order a replacement from *http://support.imaginemedia.com*.

GOODIES FOLDER

This month the goodie gods bring you a thief-smacking mini-game from Blue Byte Software, two movies, and free gamevoice software. Rock on!

Unfortunately, not all doors can be opened in the demo. Dirty Lucas.

Enter the International House of Mojo

ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND

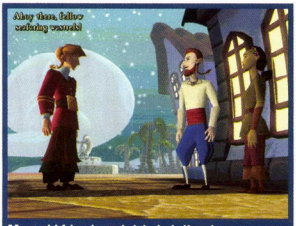
www.lucasarts.com/products/monkey4/ • LucasArts
Pentium 200, 32MB, 3D card

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to...*Escape from Monkey Island*? Well, the time has come, mates, and every adventure gamer the world over is well aware of it. This fourth title in the line of classic adventure games is as hilarious as you'd hoped, and brilliantly colorful thanks to the *Grim Fandango* 3D engine. The demo gives you a taste of the first few minutes of the game, including a high-resolution opening cinematic. Once on the Island, find your way to the Scumm bar and Insult Arm Wrestle with the little pudgy man in the bar. Do well enough, and you'll have the first member of your crew. Then you're still responsible for stopping the nasty catapult, procuring a boat, and fleshing out your crew. Good luck!

KEY CHART

You'll need to know a few keys, since there's no configuration screen.

Pick up	P
Use	Enter, U
Look at	E
Run	Shift
Skip Dialogue	Delete
Scroll through Dialogue Choices	Page Up/Down
Inventory	I



Meet old friends and risk their lives!

www.DailyRadar.com

FROGGER 2

www.hasbrointeractive.com • Hasbro Interactive
Pentium 200, 32MB RAM

Those frogs just keep coming back for more. This time, Frogger's arch-enemy, Swampy the Crocodile, has kidnapped the frog babies, and it's time for Frogger to get them back. How, you might ask? By jumping through puzzling levels filled with crazy obstacles, power-ups, and menacing enemies, of course! With the help of his girlfriend, Lillie, Frogger's in the greatest adventure of his life, even with his unnatural fear of water. Narrowly escape lawnmowers! Dive into peril! Onward!

CRIMSON SKIES

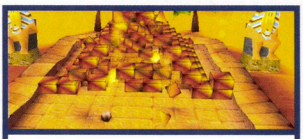
www.microsoft.com/games/crimsonskies/
Microsoft • Pentium 233, 32MB RAM, 3D card

Crimson Skies puts you in the hot seat for a treasure-seeking adventure over the South Pacific. It's an alternate 1937, where the Depression split the U.S. into factions and the sky is a battleground. Dogfights, buried treasure, and treachery await you in two single-player missions straight from the full game. The graphics are simply gorgeous, and the control is arcade- rather than sim-style. When you're done with your thrilling adventure, take on real pilots over sunny Hawaii in one of four planes on Microsoft's Zone.

VIRTUAL POOL 3

www.interplay.com/vp3/ • Interplay
Pentium 233, 32MB RAM, 3D card

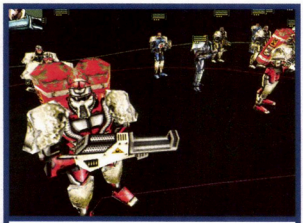
It's the only pool game guaranteed to improve your game! *Virtual Pool 3* features enhanced graphics and a new career mode. With true-to-life physics and a fully customizable point of view, *VP3* is still the best pool game in town. Did we mention that professional pool player Jeanette Lee, the "Black Widow," endorses it? Mmmm...



BREAKOUT

www.hasbrointeractive.com • Hasbro Interactive
Pentium 200, 32MB RAM

Now equipped with the new 3D *Pong* engine, *Breakout* introduces exciting new power-ups and surprises. Its simplistic gameplay is sure to attract gamers of all ages: just use your paddle to aim the ball and blast your way through pyramids, castle walls, and even barnyard obstacles. Gamers new and old will have a blast.



BATTLE ISLE: THE ANDOSIA WAR

www.bluebyte.net/ • Blue Byte
Pentium 300, 64MB RAM, 3D card

Fifth in the immensely popular *Battle Isle* series from Blue Byte Software, *The Andosia War* puts you in a turn-based tactical confrontation in a real-time environment. The game's revolutionary design combining real-time management of economic resources with *Incubation*-style combat is sure to please fans of the genre. This demo contains three tutorial scenarios so you can get familiar with the interface, while receiving a taste of the game's incredible graphics.

STARFLEET COMMAND VOL. II

www.interplay.com/sfcommand/sfc2/ • Interplay
Pentium 233, 32MB RAM, 3D card

Whether or not you're a *Star Trek* fan, *Starfleet Command II* is one heck of a starship naval combat game. Redesigned from the ground up, it surpasses its predecessor's unique style of play with eight races to control and a completely revamped fleet-control interface. The demo gives you four tutorial missions, led by the voice of Sulu, and limited multiplay as the Federation, Klingon, Interstellar Concordium, and Mirak races.

INSANE

www.codemasters.com/previews/insane/
Codemasters • Pentium 233, 64MB RAM, 3D card

Face road challenges in this Internet demo, which lets you challenge your friends on LAN or the new Codemasters Multiplayer Network. Drive 4x4 vehicles, trucks and even military vehicles, all with realistic, individual handling on vast landscapes that are as beautiful as they are hazardous. Go *Insane*!

EarthLink

With unlimited Internet access, 6MB web space, and tons of extras, EarthLink makes accessing the Internet fun and easy! Plug into EarthLink today and get 250 free hours (in your first month)! For Earthlink technical support, call (800) 395-8410.

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– Montgomery Scott, stardate 3193.0

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- 2 new races with horrifying new weapons: The Mirak Star League and their devastating missile technology and the mysterious forces of the Interstellar Concordium.

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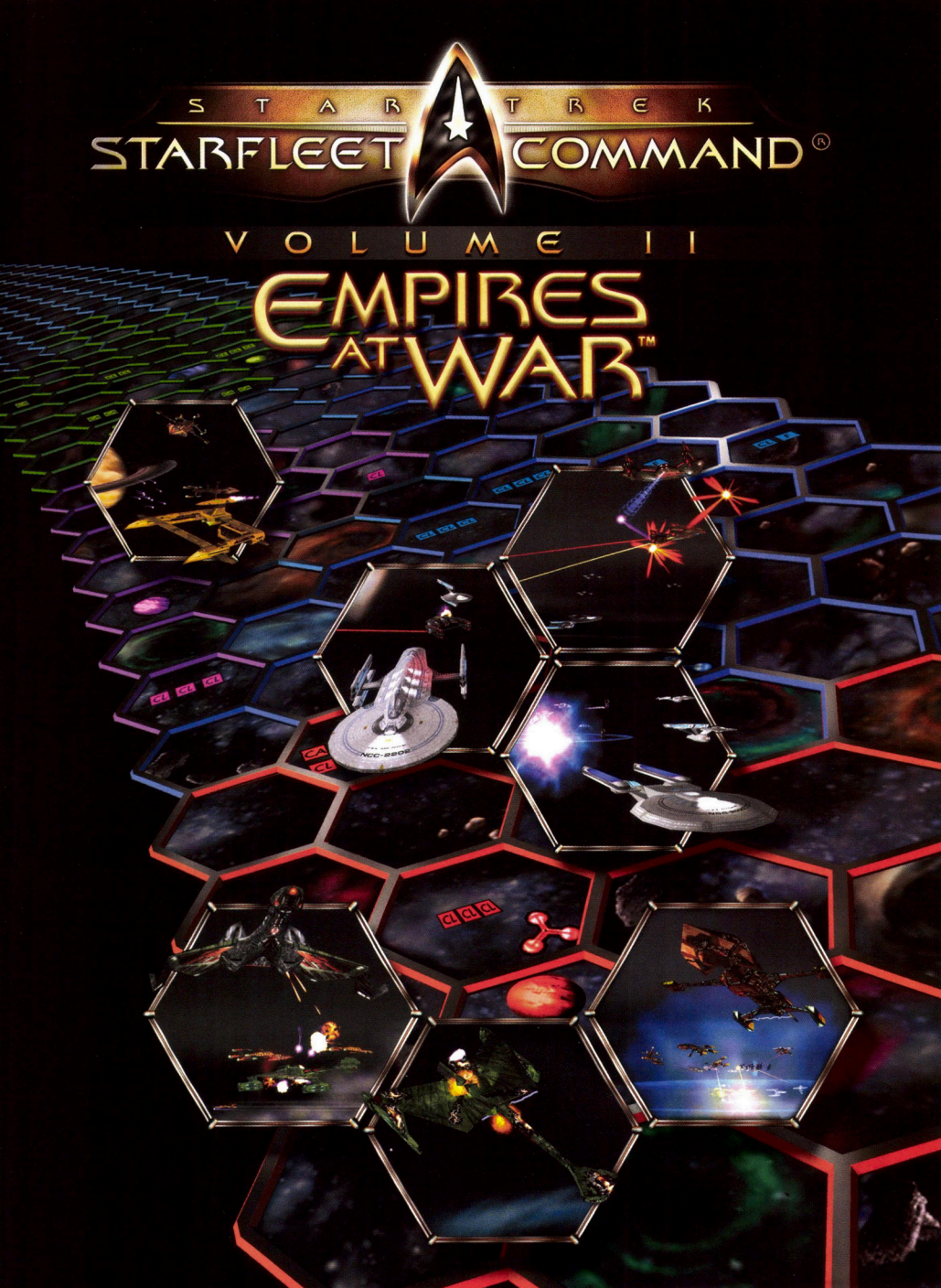
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If only those lazy sheep had taken on the attacking ships, things would have gone so very differently for this small town.

Empire Earth

Warping the RTS genre from the Stone Age to the distant future

What do you do when you've just designed the original *Age of Empires* and Microsoft wants you to churn out a sequel in a single year? Run, as fast as you can, form your own development team, and find a new publisher willing to give you over three years of development time. That's exactly what Rick Goodman, *AoE*'s lead designer, has done, and he's finally ready to unveil the true successor to one of the most popular RTS titles in history.

Even though you've probably just started seeing ads for *Empire Earth* popping up here and there, it's actually been in development since mid-1998. According to Goodman, back when *Age of Kings* was on the drawing board, Ensemble Studios was interested in keeping it as close to the original as possible, while still refining the game in key areas. But Goodman had a larger vision that he knew was going to take more time, and he wasn't interested in making a sequel on the same scale as the original. According to Goodman: "[*Empire Earth*] was a big concept. It was a good step forward for real-time strategy, and it merited the time and attention it would take to be completed — and that's what I wanted to pursue." And with that, he parted ways with Ensemble and formed Stainless Steel Studios, where he's been working tirelessly on this grand plan ever since.

At first glance, *EE*'s theme of strategically progressing through different "ages" is incredibly familiar. But unlike *AoE*'s four ages, *Empire Earth* has a whopping 12 epochs to battle through — each with its own set of units, spanning an amazing 500,000-year timeline. You'll begin in prehistoric times, complete with men in loin-

"My biscuits are burnin'!": *Empire Earth*'s 3D engine makes for some rather good-looking disasters.

"Trojan, America's most trusted brand of condom": Hmm, what's *really* in that horse, anyway?

F.Y.I.

CATEGORY: Real-time strategy

DEVELOPER: Stainless Steel Studios

PUBLISHER: Sierra

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE: 70%

RELEASE DATE: Fall 2001

IN A NUTSHELL: Take *Age of Empires II*, multiply its scope by three, and you'll just be scratching the surface of *Empire Earth*.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL?: Well, Rick Goodman, for starters. As the lead designer of the original *Age of Empires*, he's more than proven his skill in making historical RTS games. If his team manages to deliver on Rick's vision, *Empire Earth* could be an instant classic.

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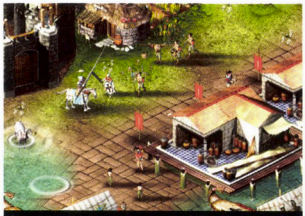
cloths heaving wooden clubs; you'll move through current day while making pit stops in World War I and WWII; and you'll end up in the distant future, where giant robot mechs rule the battlefield. As you journey through the ages, you'll choose from 12 civilizations ranging from Americans to Babylonians to French to Aztecs, each with unique cultural strengths and weaknesses. Plus, ambitious players can create civilizations from scratch by tweaking up to 100 different attributes (attack or speed bonuses, defensive traits, and so on) from a pool of points to distribute. In brilliant fashion, this level of customizability allows the casual gamer to simply jump in and start playing, while giving hardcore power-users the freedom to tweak and customize to their heart's content.



The attention to detail in *Empire Earth* is staggering. It's difficult to believe it isn't sprite-based.

Gamers disappointed by *AoE*'s sense of scale should rejoice. Look at the size of those towers!

HISTORICALLY ACCURATE

Like the *AoE* series, *EE* is all about historical realism. Virtually every unit in the game (through the present day) is modeled after real-world personnel and equipment; and while the future elements of *EE* are clearly fictionalized, they're not *too* terribly farfetched, and are entirely in keeping with the realistic feel of the game. For example, as you start battling in WWI, you'll be creating aircraft like the Sopwith Camel, and moving on to the Spitfire in WWII. As you move into more modern times, you'll begin producing cutting-edge ass-kickers like the Apache Gunship and F-15. The Stainless Steel Studios boys are promising an astounding 300 different units for the single-player game, 200 of them available in multiplay. (And you thought *Total Annihilation* pushed the unit count to the breaking point!) The discrepancy between the two modes is due to 100 unique hero units that help progress the single-player storyline while serving no purpose in multiplayer games.

Speaking of heroes, ever wanted to take control of General Patton? How about Alexander the Great? These figures and many others will be at your disposal as a way to progress the story of the three primary campaigns as they move you from the first epoch to the last. As an added level of complexity, whenever a hero is in the vicinity of your other troops, your army will gain varying degrees of morale bonuses, and perform with more vigor.

With so many units, balancing must be a Herculean task, right? "No, because every unit that's in the game has a place in the game," explains Jon Alenson, one of *Empire*'s designers. "[Because the majority of the units are real-world] we knew exactly how each one was going to react to all of the other ones, giving us a large target balance for the game to begin with. After that, it's all just fine-tuning."

Something we noticed after watching the game in action for several hours was that the warfare is a bit slower and more realistic than that in an ordinary RTS. As Alenson puts it: "The game involves a lot more thought. It's definitely not *Total Annihilation*, where you build, scroll, and click your troops out, and then you don't even watch the battle. *Empire Earth* is much more about having the right units for the right battle and picking your opponents wisely. There's a lot more strategy involved here, and that slower pace helps bring out the strategy elements."

Still, "slow" can often equal "unexciting" if not executed properly. Luckily, things seem to be headed in the right direction. Of the many battles we experienced during our visit with SSS, the one we remember most is a struggle that took place sometime in the late 1700s involving ground troops

Nearly every unit in the game is based on real-world personnel and equipment. As a result, even relatively large groups of weaker troops will have a difficult time taking out armored vehicles.

WAR THROUGH THE AGES

As time moves forward in the game, the look of the different ages changes to match it. You'll start the game with little more than clubs, be taken well into modern times, and then head directly into the distant future — with many stops along the way.

with muskets and old-fashioned cannons. Each side was fighting valiantly, and whenever infantry from opposing sides clashed, the ensuing battle was both ferocious and amazingly detailed. Animations seemed not to repeat themselves, and the sound effects were stunning enough to put even the beta version of *Empire Earth* in the running for our Best Sound of the Year award. The sounds of war could be heard coming from all corners of the battlefield — and like the animations, there seemed to be very little repetition overall.

MASSIVE MULTIPLAYER

As with all RTS games, *Empire's* multiplayer ingredient is a vital part of the mix. And like many of the best role-playing titles (*Baldur's Gate II*, anyone?), the three primary campaigns that drive the single-player game can also be played cooperatively in multiplay. In addition, a random map generator will ship with the game, making modes like team and deathmatch consistently exciting experiences. And at this stage, SSS is anticipating multiplayer battles with as many as 16 players at a time.

Games can take place in any set of ages you choose, or all 12 of them combined. And each age features so many units that playing entire games in just one, two, or three of your favorites should be wholly viable.

For enterprising players, a powerful campaign editor will be included in the package. Like the random map generator, this feature is already functioning. In fact, so much of the game is already in place, the team has been playing multiplayer games of *EE* for over a year! Talk about playtesting.

IF LOOKS COULD KILL

On the graphics side, *Empire Earth*, while looking a lot like a beautiful sprite-based game, is actually fully rendered in 3D — a bit surprising considering the amazing level of detail SSS has been able to bring to the screen. The move to 3D doesn't mean that you'll be able to spin the camera angle around, however, because the camera angle is locked into place for design purposes. Don't worry, though: you can show off the engine by zooming in and out of the action as you like.

The designers found that a 3D world could react more realistically to battles and that in such an environment, the units could be animated better, while using a lot less RAM in the process. At the same time, the art team was confident from the start that 3D technology had progressed far enough that they'd be able to get the same level of graphical richness ordinarily reserved for sprite-based RTS games. Interestingly enough, the team doesn't boast about their transition to the third dimension. "We were a year into the project before we made the design decision which way to go," Goodman says. "It didn't really matter to us. This was not a 3D game; it was a real-time strategy game about empire building, and whether the gameplay was 3D or 2D was completely superfluous from the designers' standpoint. We're not selling [*EE*] as a 3D game; we're selling it as a game you should buy that just happens to be in 3D."

From what we've seen of *Empire Earth* thus far, it may also just happen to kick the genre's ass upside-down. Real-time strategy fans everywhere should be in for a real treat when the tweaking and testing is done sometime in late 2001.

— Greg Vederman

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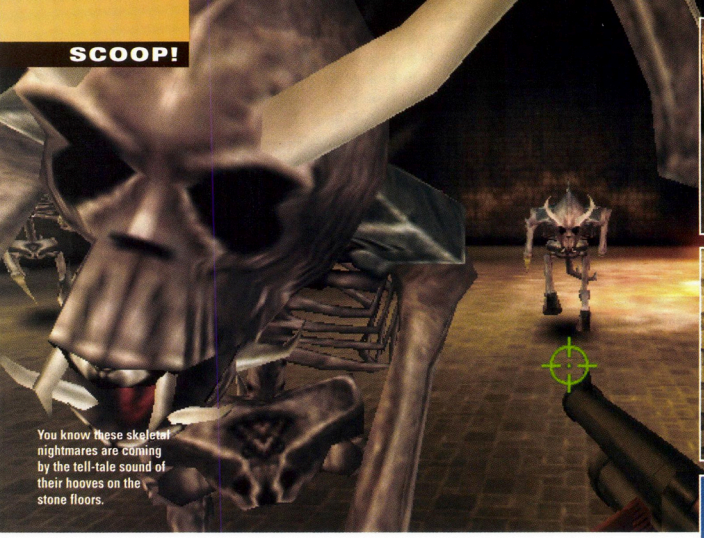
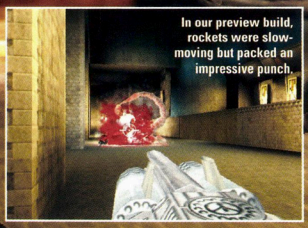
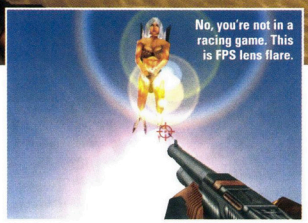


You know these skeletal nightmares are coming by the tell-tale sound of their hooves on the stone floors.

The cursor changes color as you damage enemies. When it turns red, you know they're nearly dead.



In our preview build, rockets were slow-moving but packed an impressive punch.



No, you're not in a racing game. This is FPS lens flare.

Serious Sam

New technology and old-school gameplay mix in this FPS that has Net junkies buzzing

Croatia? The only reason that most U.S. gamers have ever heard of this Balkan nation is the tragic conflict that's been raging in the region for the past several years. But when a tech demo of a new first-person shooter called *Serious Sam* appeared on the Net, Croatia suddenly seemed right next door. That tech demo showcased some impressive visual technology, with a straight-up, no-nonsense shooter as the core of its gameplay.

Judging from an early build of the game featuring six of the levels, most of the weapons, and a grotesque menagerie of enemies, the focus of *Serious Sam* is simple and clear: fast, fun, frenetic action, with little regard for the kind of story-telling elements, emotive gameplay innovations, or advanced environment interactions that us high-falutin' gamers have been raving about since *Half-Life* debuted.

I'm really not sure what this creature's attacking with, but it sure does hurt.

The most obvious gameplay influence is classic *Doom*. Enemies teleport in behind you as you progress down corridors. Desperate dashes for health, armor, and ammo power-ups are routinely thwarted by evil troops that continue popping out of the ether. Likewise, just when you think you've fought off the last baddie in a seemingly never-ending wave of evil monstrosities, the game taunts you with a fraction of second of quiet time (just enough to rub your sweaty palms on your pants) before 10 more of his buddies pop in, weapons blazing.

Within the environments — which mix spooky, claustrophobic interiors with astoundingly huge outdoor battlegrounds — you'll find switches to flick, levers to pull, and secret rooms to uncover. Most switches and levers functional in our build certainly didn't require much puzzling, though the opening of certain doors leading into other rooms was highlighted by a cut to an in-engine cinematic. With a few exceptions, it's all built on gameplay techniques we've seen before.

Similarly, the levels themselves are mostly simple structures — for all the engine's abilities, it's no *Quake III* or *Unreal Tournament*, so don't bother searching for any curved surfaces. The game offers plenty of other bells and whistles, though (which is the reason Derek Smart licensed the engine for 3000AD's post-*Battlecruiser* project). The

F.Y.I.

CATEGORY: First-person shooter

DEVELOPER: Croteam

PUBLISHER: Gathering of Developers

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE: 60%

RELEASE DATE: Q1 2001

IN A NUTSHELL: Pure *Doom* gameplay and an impressive new engine bring to life some incredibly bizarre creatures.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL?: *SS* was originally a tech demo that caused conniptions in the first-person-shooter community. With a publisher, and various tech tweaks available to the artists, this shot from left field could end up being a real hit.

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The open areas look as good as the interiors, and will be available in split-screen multiplayer mode.

"How about a little head?"

interior levels use lighting very well, creating murky shadows that hide enemies, as well as shrouded narrow corridors that lead to special power-ups. Often, you'll be attacked by creatures high in the rafters of a cavernous room, only to find their hidden "roost" several minutes later after climbing up through the level. The texture detail on walls is definitely high-grade. Up close, the stone walls take on a high-res roughness that you'd expect to pixelate at some point — but it never does. The etchings in the Egyptian setting seem to have the same amazing color, style, and definition at whatever distance you view them from.

So, with gameplay that doesn't seem new, and an engine that's still shy of the market leaders, why are we so excited about *Serious Sam*? For starters, the monsters: never has such a vile menagerie of bizarre entities been assembled in one game. Starting with the simple Graar, these melee creatures have a gaping maw and a one-two slash attack. The female of the species is bigger and meaner (insert your own joke here), and the family also has invisible and floating variants. They're all hideous, and can move faster than you can. (In fact, that seems the case with all the creatures you'll face.) The beheaded kamikaze dudes are plain creepy — there are no one-shot head kills since it has no head and holds a bomb in each hand, as it chases you down and tries to explode in your face. Seriously, the first time the bony hooves of the skeletal nightmare horses echoed into range, it sent a shiver down my spine.

How the storyline explains these monstrosities, I'm not sure I'll ever know. Despite a rambling tale of how the ancient Egyptians are said to have had alien contact, and of a new alien war entering our solar system, the story is immaterial. There's no way it could explain gargantuan four-armed creatures lobbing green homing blobs of badness, and when the *Empire Strikes Back* AT-ST–inspired creature appears, the tone takes another turn for the bizarre.

All the enemies are incredibly detailed in their weirdness, with a large array of animations that make their hideous forms writhe, swipe, and dodge with a finesse that belies their bulk, and in some cases, their lack of heads! The grotesque forms are matched by sound effects that create an eerie ambience. Among the groans of monsters hidden in the blackness — their pulsating breathing reminiscent of *Doom*'s imps — bloodcurdling screams hint at vile experiments and pure terror. It all makes for a wild experience, as the combo of the detailed look, sound, and level design gives a refreshing shot in the arm to some old-school gameplay.

Indeed, the classic-shooter style even goes so far as to record a points score (remember those?) for each creature killed and power-ups found. The technology allows a wide range of stats to be tracked and displayed via a new interface screen that also stores updated information on the mission goals, new monster varieties encountered, and any weapons you have strapped (metaphorically) on your back. This interface screen helps push the mission goals along, supporting a few in-engine cinematics that will also strive to give some purpose to the shooting match.

Certainly, once completed, *Serious Sam* will get plenty of attention from the hordes of online denizens already tracking its every move. It's great to see a small team able to create a product that interests a publisher enough to back it and get it out on shelves. So kudos, too, to g.o.d. for showing its support. When Sam makes his full-fledged PC debut next year, there'll be plenty to talk about.

— Rob Smith

If you look carefully, you can see what this creature had for lunch. And you're about to be dessert.

Wonderland has been cruelly corrupted by the deranged Queen of Hearts. The Mad Hatter, Jabberwock and other familiar characters have become her menacing minions. Out-run, outwit, or outfight these twisted characters and confront the sadistic Queen. Only one of you can survive. Travel through wickedly surreal landscapes wielding an arsenal of sinister toys, including rapid-fire playing cards and jack-in-the-box bombs. Designed by American McGee of Quake® and Quake II™ fame, and using an enhanced Quake III: Arena™ engine, American McGee's Alice pulls you into a fast-paced, third-person world where horrific characters and fiendish puzzles conspire to deprive you of your sanity before they take your life. Are you ready for the next chapter of Alice? Visit alice.ea.com

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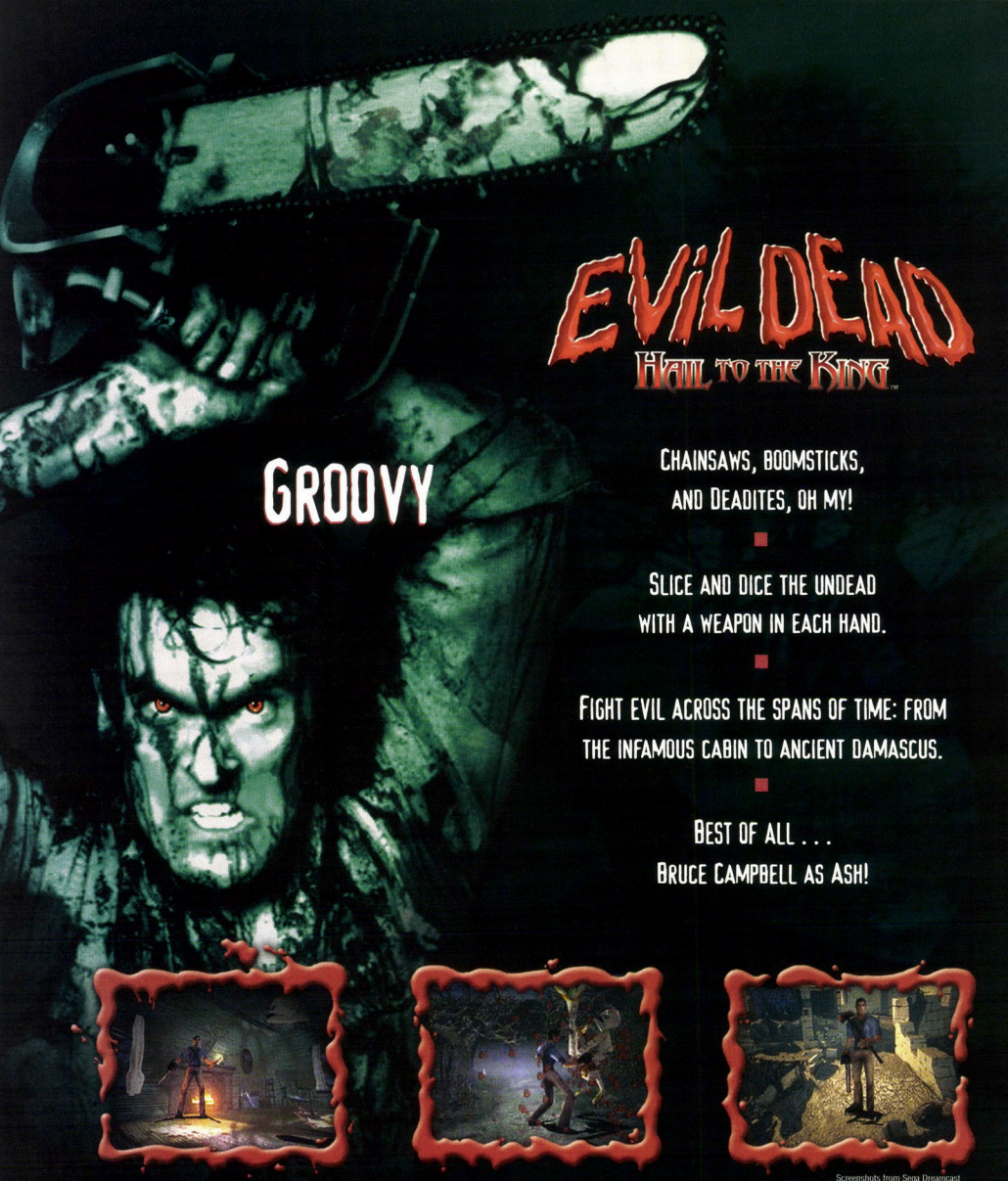

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SimCoaster

Grab your mouse and some cotton candy: It's time for another ride around the park!

You are being *hyp-no-tized* — just like that little squirrely guy with the catatonic walk seems to be.

There's a soft spot in our cold, black hearts for the *Theme Park* series. Longtime readers may remember that the sole game demo gracing *PC Gamer*'s debut issue (on a 3.5-inch floppy disk, no less) was *Theme Park*, the original amusement park–building simulation. Goodbye, old friend, because — at least for the U.S. market — the *Theme Park* brand has been retired.

No worries, though: *SimCoaster* is set to continue the *Theme Park* legacy. While its shiny new name may suggest, intentionally or not, that *SimCoaster* will be a hardcore coaster-building sim akin to *Roller Coaster Tycoon*, it's actually a direct sequel to last year's fantasy-themed *Sim Theme Park*. But that doesn't mean Maxis will let you down in the coaster department: the game features 18 unique coasters and log flume rides — twice as many as in *Sim Theme Park*.

This time around, there's also a story: Mr. Maybury, CEO of the local theme park, is preparing for retirement and thinks you may be the perfect person to take his job. The curmudgeonly Board of Directors isn't quite so sure, and will present you with a series of 30 challenges, each based on criteria like improving customer and staff happiness, safety, public relations, and, of course, sales. Fail any five and you'll be fired immediately. On top of that, Mr. Banks, the Finance Director, has it in for you and will try his best to make sure you don't succeed in becoming his new boss. Think of it as *Dynasty* with bumper cars.

The Arabian Nights setting features genies, sand, and more sand.

The park itself, which appears to take up an entire planet (OK, think *Star Trek* meets *Dynasty* with bumper cars), is split up into three theme lands: Land of Invention, Polarzone, and Arabian Nights. You start off in Land of Invention, a vision of the future by way of Jules Verne, and begin building your park. Throughout the game, you'll be given 18 different objectives to gain entry to all three theme lands and expand your parks. For example, some areas set for expansion may sit on top of a lake. To make the land usable, your job will be to train your engineers to the point where they can drain the water and reshape the plot. Hiring and maintaining quality staff (engineers, security guards, custodians, entertainers) will be more important than ever. You'll need to upgrade their skill levels to meet certain goals, and if you don't cough up the green, they just might go on strike.

Unlike its predecessor, *SimCoaster* will let you switch themes mid-game. In fact, doing so will sometimes be a necessity — say, completing an objective in the frosty Polarzone theme to open up an area in the Aladdin-ish world of Arabian Nights. And unlike most sims, this game has an ending (though you can continue to care for your parks without receiving new challenges or goals).

Visually, *SimCoaster* is a dead-ringer for *Sim Theme Park*. Your helpful exclamation-point advisor is still around, but he's now a she ("On today's Ricky Lake...Transgendered Punctuation!") and a little less intrusive. The coasters are still very easy to build, and as before you'll be able to walk around the park and enjoy all the rides in first-person mode. You'll even get to trade the coasters you build online. Best of all, unlike real theme parks, *SimCoaster* will open in February.

— *Chuck Osborn*

F.Y.I.

CATEGORY: Simulation

DEVELOPER: Maxis

PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE: 75%

RELEASE DATE: February 2001

IN A NUTSHELL: Ignore the name change — it's a sequel to *Sim Theme Park*, which means more build-and-ride excitement.

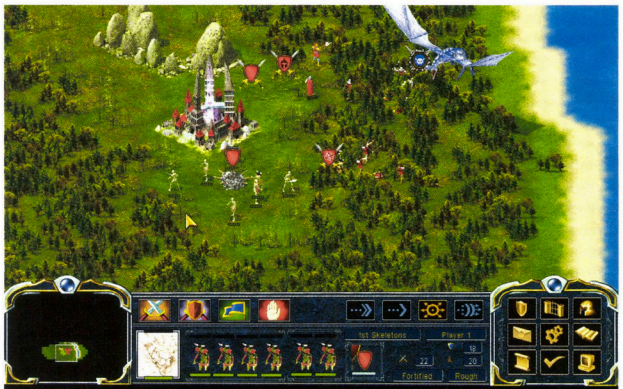
WHAT'S SO SPECIAL?: It's got a story to give focus to the park-building, more coasters than ever before, and inventive design. It's also the only theme park management game that lets you ride all the attractions in vibrant first-person 3D.

Kohan: Immortal Sovereigns

At last! A thinking man's real-time strategy game

Fresh ideas are diamonds in this industry. Stale ones are as common as dirt. "It's like *StarCraft* — only underwater…No, no, it's like *Total Annihilation*, but with rabid kangaroos set against the backdrop of a post-apocalyptic New Zealand." Sadly, many "new" real-time strategy games look, sound or feel conspicuously like the latest rage. In this age of obese budgets and tentative publishers, many games tend to borrow an awful lot from each other. Thankfully, a group of upstarts out of Houston, Texas, is trying to shake things up a bit with its upcoming RTS, *Kohan: Immortal Sovereigns*. Though *Kohan* is TimeGate Studios' first project, it seems clear from what we've seen so far that this team has what it takes to make a hallmark title.

Kohan's developers have grown tired of RTS games that reward gamers when they "rush" attack, or when they're able to defeat their enemies simply by pumping out large numbers of units without any legitimate forethought. So the mechanics in *Kohan* work a bit differently than you're probably used to. Like many turn-based strategy games (and *WarCraft III* prior to its redesign), *Kohan* doesn't let you send out units without a leader unit. A basic party consists of one leader or hero and four units of the exact same type. Additionally, there are two support positions that can be filled with more units for a total of seven units per group. Since you won't have direct control over the individual units in your "stack," it's a good thing that the AI, even at this early stage of development, seems much smarter than in your average RTS. Archers, for example, will attack with swords when up close to an enemy, but with worse results than a regular melee fighter. Plus, aspects like troop morale, terrain, party formations, and fighting conditions affect unit behavior and play huge roles — making *Kohan* much more of a "thinking man's" game than most RTS games ever aspire to be.



Unlike RTS games such as *Age of Empires*, *Kohan*'s towns don't spread out beyond the castle walls.

Though TimeGate is keeping much of *Kohan*'s story quiet, what little information we can spill at this point is still very interesting. As it turns out, Kohans are immortals, and while they were once the undisputed rulers of their world, they've recently all awoken from a long sleep only to discover that they have no memories of who or where they are. As the game progresses and these 20 or so Kohans begin to interact with one another, the game's full story will be revealed. Also, Kohans (heroes) will often lead your units instead of generic "leader" characters, and this close interaction will help involve you in the background story even further.

In *Kohan*, large battles tend to resemble those fought in the Civil War.

Like most RTS games, *Kohan* has its share of city building and resource management, but you'll spend less time worrying about such things than you would in, say, *Age of Empires II* or *Total Annihilation*. Unlike in those games, once a city has been built, it basically takes care of itself. Ultimately, this is a great thing because it lets you focus on the amazing real-time battles and acquisition strategy rather than planting corn.

If it takes a small upstart to knock some sense into RTS developers worldwide, then we say divert funding to the new guys. We're more than a little eager to see TimeGate's finished product; if first impressions are any indication, this company is going places.

— Greg Vederman

F.Y.I.

CATEGORY: Real-time strategy

DEVELOPER: TimeGate Studios

PUBLISHER: Strategy First

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE: 75%

RELEASE DATE: Feb.–March 2001

IN A NUTSHELL: TimeGate is aiming to create an RTS with the qualities that make turn-based strategy games so fun.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL?: Lively, realistic battles. Terrain that actually makes a difference. Beautiful 2D art with tons of character animation. Surprises around every corner. If these sorts of things appeal to you, *Kohan* may blow you away when it ships in early 2001.

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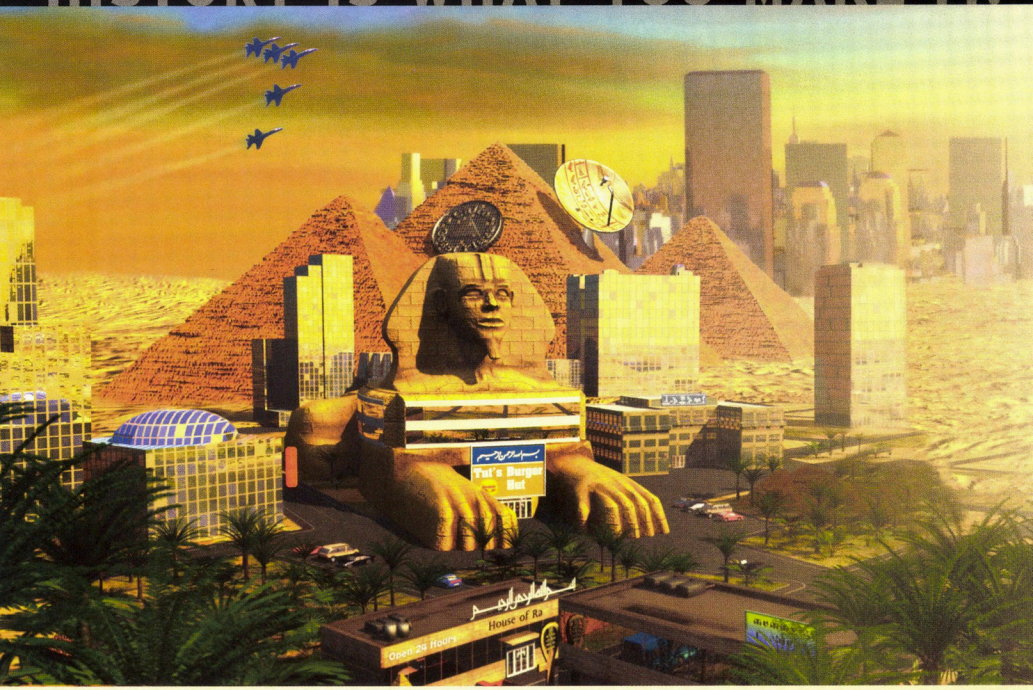

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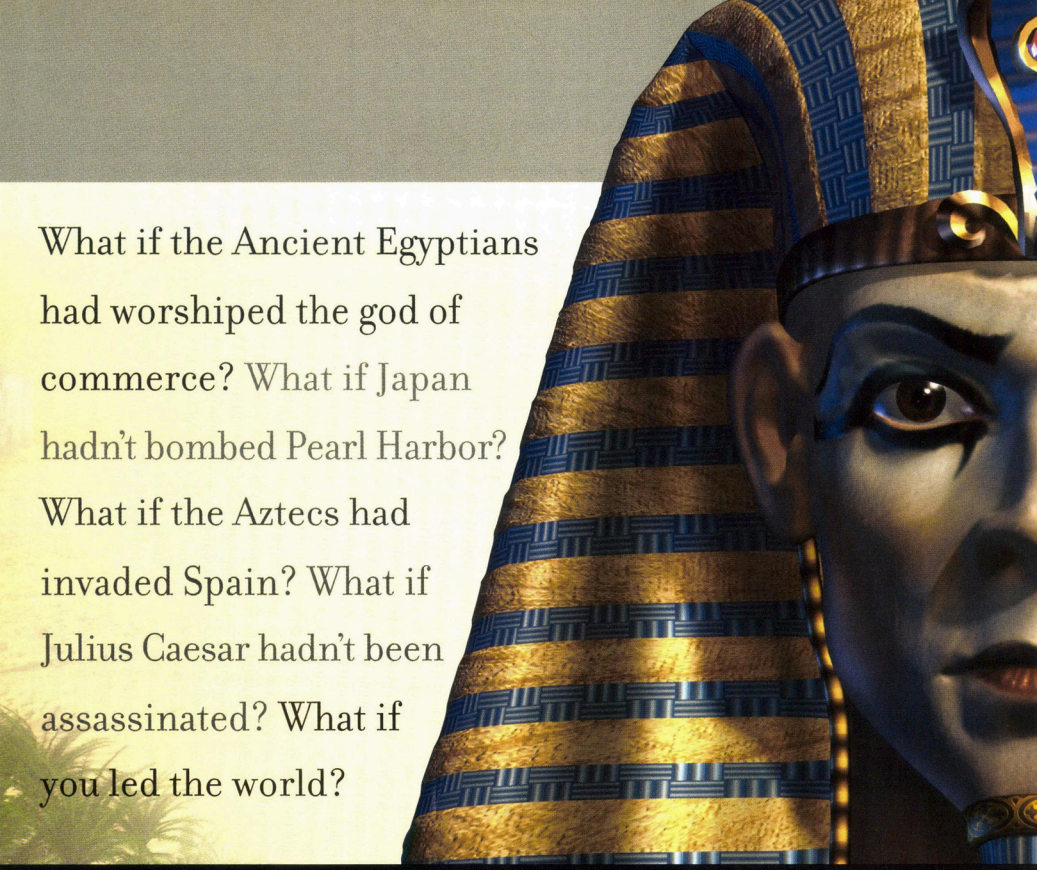

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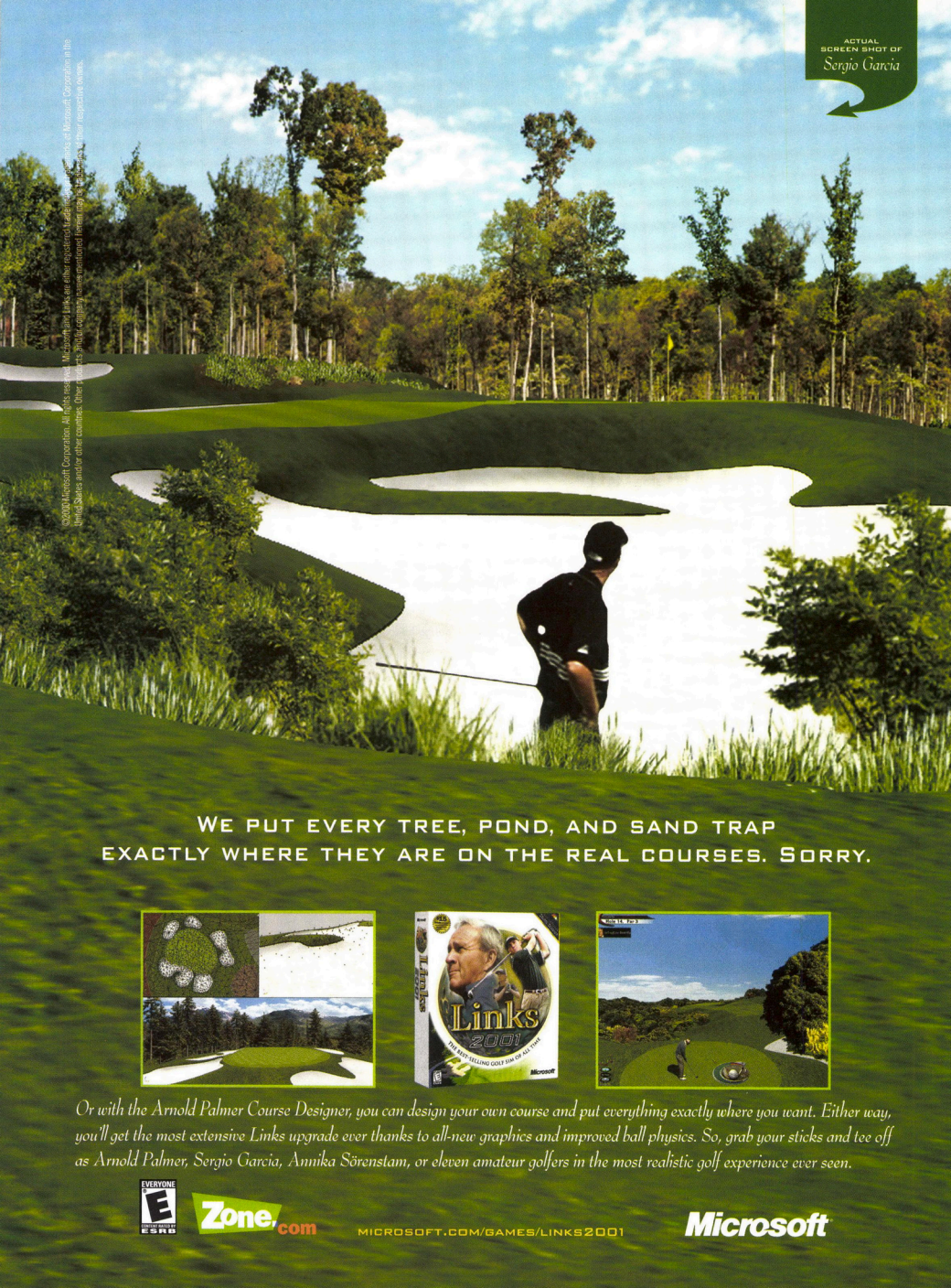
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Oni

Bungie exorcises its demons with this high-jumping, high-kicking, high-concept anime opus

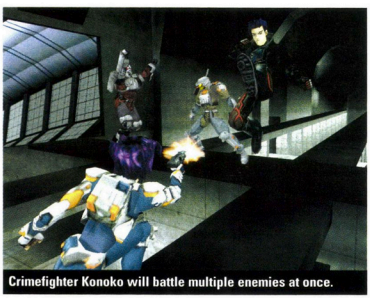
We have seen the future, and it looks a lot like a Japanese cartoon, where huge-eyed and purple-haired dispatchers of righteous justice perform chop-saki on their enemies as if it were some new type of beautiful but bruise-inducing ballet. Call it *Oni*, the ambitious and oft-delayed project from Bungie that will finally see release on PCs in 2001 and the lesser platforms (Macintosh and PlayStation 2) shortly thereafter.

This 3D, third-person-perspective action game serves up the spiky-haired and haunted Konoko as its heroine. A supercop operating under the jurisdiction of the futuristic and nebulous-sounding Tech Crimes Unit, Konoko will be pressed into the fray against not only a far-flung criminal syndicate, but her own inner phantoms as well; "Oni," you see, is the Japanese word for ghosts or demons. While the game is certainly slanted toward fist-meets-face — or, alternately, screaming-hot lead meets tender flesh — Bungie has made certain that *Oni* will not be without its thoughtful aspects. As Konoko plows her way through a criminal conspiracy, she'll begin to realize that friends are not always allies, and everything is always something, but things are seldom what they seem to be.

Using simple, first-person-shooter–style controls, *Oni* features a sharp sense of the exaggerated cartoonish movements that fuel such Japanese cartoons as *Akira* and *Fist of the North Star*. "In keeping with the game's anime setting," explains *Oni* producer Hamilton Chu, "many of the characters have exaggerated acrobatic skills. Leaping high in the air and doing a somersault while kicking in one direction and firing in another is commonplace in this world." An advanced-interpolation animation system makes it possible for Konoko to perform a series of leaps and combat-based moves with no noticeable jerks or sputters. In the heat of a scrap, this good cop can sprint toward, say, a blue-suited, armor-wearing thug, perform a slide to knock the goon to the unyielding floor, and then snap into a fighting stance in one fluid sweep. From there, it's possible to send the aforementioned Blue Striker to the abyss by plugging him with various projectile weaponry, or knock him insensate with crouch kicks, smartly placed groin shots, or even a wrestling-style backbreaker.

We saw this in *The Matrix*. With popcorn, to boot.

Though thoroughly unfinished, the preview version of *Oni* we played held great promise. The intuitive movement and combat scheme will help you settle right into *Oni*'s rather metallic world, and simply enjoy the quirky, oversized, anime-inspired villains and sharp graphics. (Watching Konoko dash and then snap into a leaping forward roll is a wonderful videogame moment.) Bungie has seemingly captured a nice blend of action and intrigue, and the far-flung quest to restore order that takes Konoko from claustrophobic prisons to cavernous airports seems perfectly tailored for frenzied good fun.



Crimefighter Konoko will battle multiple enemies at once.

Sadly, the designers have excised what could only be considered the extra slathering of butter on the tasty bag of popcorn that is *Oni*: a multiplayer option (even though a fun multiplayer game was running successfully two years ago at E^3). When this title finally ships, its path to store shelves will likely be one of the more interesting tales of game-development trials. We can't wait.

— Greg Orlando

F.Y.I.

CATEGORY: Anime adventure

DEVELOPER: Bungie

PUBLISHER: G.O.D.

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE: 75%

RELEASE DATE: Q1 2001

IN A NUTSHELL: Anime heroine Konoko, a kung fu savior/Jackie Chan–ish supercop, fights strange characters in a futuristic heck.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL?: A cool plot that involves paranoia, giant robots, great graphics, and splendid animations. *Oni* combines straightforward, third-person *Tomb Raider*–style exploration and puzzle solving with hand-to-hand brawling and plenty of gunplay.

Emperor: Battle for Dune

The worm is about to turn for the real-time strategy genre

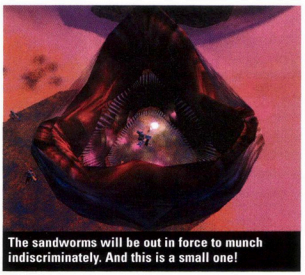
I vividly recall the first moment I spent with the original *Dune*, when a buddy loaded the first level and I was faced with a solitary character and a lone harvester. When I clicked on the guy and moved him, I immediately got the genre that the game invented — the beauty of real-time strategy was apparent even in its birthing moment.

Now Westwood is adding a few new layers of beauty to its time-tested concept. *Emperor: Battle for Dune* is a gloriously rendered full-3D RTS of epic scope, and seeks to encompass every conceivable tactical detail of the Frank Herbert science-fiction saga. Under the guidance of Westwood President Brett Sperry and lead designer Chris Longpre, the inventors of the RTS are poised to re-invent it.

Some may wonder whether *Dune 2000* might be construed as an initial *Dune* follow-up, but Westwood downplays it as more of a tech-update Director's Cut. "We added some logical things for *Dune 2000*, and brought it up to date, but it wasn't a true sequel," says Sperry. "With *Emperor*, we really wanted to do a true, full-blown sequel."

Emperor is looking like a clinic, due to the fact that Westwood has been working on it in secret for almost two years. With the game still nearly a year from hitting stores, its graphics are already glossed to a sheen that would leave most 3D RTS competition envious. The environment is predictably bleak, but gorgeous terrain art keeps the desert setting invigorating instead of boring. Carefully delineated elevation, landform arrangement, oases, and all-important spice fields create a dazzling desert in which to wage war. But desert isn't the only environment.

"In later stages of the game, you'll actually pursue your enemies back to their home planets," Longpre reveals. "And this gives us the opportunity to lay out settings other than the desert." Expect combat in jungle, arctic, and urban locales as you chase the endgame.



The sandworms will be out in force to munch indiscriminately. And this is a small one!

Each house will have to use weaponry and construction to overcome the forbidding landscape.

Emperor's extensive single-player campaign can be played as the noble Atreides clan, the rugged and warlike Harkonnen, and the mysterious, treacherous Ordos. These races interact with six other minor races, including the sandworm-riding Fremen and the arms-dealing Ix. By treating the subhouses well in the campaign, you can craft alliances and draw new benefits to your cause.

The different houses have decidedly unique approaches to the war. House Atreides deploys technologically superior forces in an effort to win battles with surgical precision and minimal loss of life. The Harkonnen favor obscenely destructive weapons like flamethrower infantry and the Death's Head Missile, while the Ordos rely on sneaky tactics like shielded units and Chaos Lightning (which sets enemies upon one another in a berserker rage).

But the most interesting element of *Emperor* is the grand strategy game, which offers a far more complex situation than your standard linear-mission RTS. The planet is divided into territories, and attacks are coordinated by funneling reinforcements from adjacent conquered territories. You can lose any given battle, and though you won't control the disputed territory, the war will go on: you'll just have to draw up a new strategy to cope with the loss. "This should make for a much more interesting campaign than just having to play a mission over and over again," believes Longpre.

Our early look at *Emperor* was very promising. With the game's lavish graphics, detailed forces, and free-form strategy element, Westwood's return to *Dune* should be a triumphant one.

— Daniel Morris

F.Y.I.

CATEGORY: Real-time strategy

DEVELOPER: Westwood Studios

PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE: 50%

RELEASE DATE: Late 2001

IN A NUTSHELL: Westwood is preparing an ambitious, full-3D return to the birthplace of the RTS genre.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL?: The developer of *Dune* and *Command & Conquer* — the pioneers in RTS gaming — revisits a fascinating sci-universe, re-imagining the *Dune* wars as a visually sweeping, strategically demanding RTS extravaganza.

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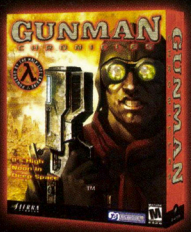

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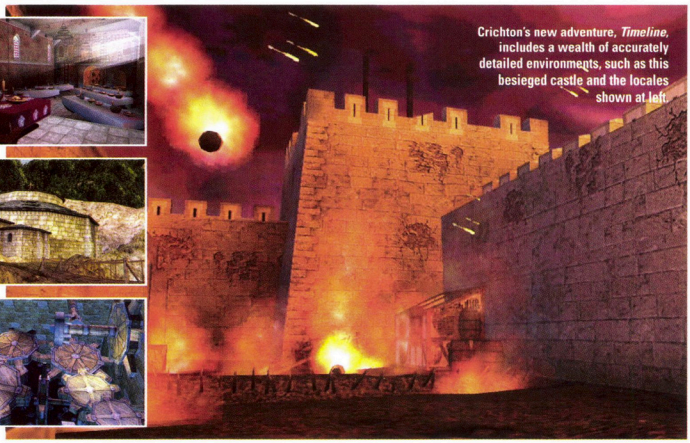
Michael Crichton Is Revolutionizing Gaming

Our own William Trotter talks with one of the most popular writers of our time about gaming, his new *Timeline* game, and quantum theory.



Crichton's new adventure, *Timeline*, includes a wealth of accurately detailed environments, such as this besieged castle and the locales shown at left.

He may not know it, but Michael Crichton's leading a quiet crusade with his new game, *Timeline*. Known mostly for his best-selling novels and blockbuster movies (*Andromeda Strain, Jurassic Park*), the multi-talented creator has views on gaming that are nothing less than revolutionary. How so? Read on and find out.

PCG: You did a prodigious amount of research for this project. What was the most surprising thing you learned about life in 14th-century Europe?

MC: The most surprising thing was that everything I had assumed about 14th-century Europe turned out to be wrong. I imagined a drab world; it was very colorful. I imagined a static world; it was full of changes and events. I imagined a world in which social roles were fixed; in reality, there was tremendous social mobility, both up and down. I imagined a world where people were born and died in the same place; in fact, people traveled extensively. They went on pilgrimages not just to fulfill a religious obligation, but because they were fun. And it was a world full of civil wars and ethnic violence — being in certain areas of 14th-century France was every bit as dangerous as being in East Timor would be today.

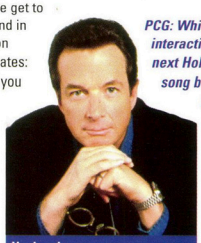
PCG: So, what philosophical insights do you have about time travel?

MC: The overarching thing I came away with was how inclined we are to see people in the past as being dumber than we are. "World War I — how stupid was that?" And it gets worse the further back we go. By the time we get to Athens, everybody's walking around in flowing robes, making speeches on marble steps and talking like Socrates: "Boy, weren't they quaint?" But if you really study any given historical period, you learn that those people were every bit as capable and intelligent and responsive to their world, and as intent on figuring out how it all worked, as we are. And in some cases, they did a better job.

PCG: You also researched a great deal about cutting-edge quantum physics. Given your extraordinary background in technology, what practical breakthroughs do you see looming from this arcane area of science?

MC: I'm convinced this will be a very powerful technology. Researchers have now demonstrated the practicality of quantum networking up to distances of about 30 kilometers. And there is such a need for secure data transmission that plenty of financial resources will be thrown in that direction. At the moment, it all revolves around characteristics of a photon, which is a very limited vehicle, but it does demonstrate the viability of the theory that data can be transmitted instantaneously over any imaginable distance. Across the city or across the galaxy — in theory, the distance doesn't matter.

Beyond that, the next step will probably be quantum computing. As far as I can tell, the appetite for processing power is essentially insatiable. Imagine the kinds of games you could design with a computer that's 1,000 times as powerful as the best existing desktops. Many of the vexing problems with artificial intelligence, for instance, could be handled by brute force if you had enough cycles to burn. As for movie-quality graphics, they'll be perfectly commonplace.



Having done two games now, Crichton's no PC gaming novice.

PCG: Which leads us to the credo that interactive entertainment will be "the next Hollywood." We've heard that siren song before, in the early days of CD-ROMs, and we were deluged with utter crap. Why is it more likely to happen today?

MC: Well, the computing power to do that either exists or is clearly on its way. What it comes down to now is growth of the audience. Until now, the

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***Timeline*'s lack of hardcore violence stems from its creator's emphasis on story and suspense over "cheap thrills."**

gaming experience has been kind of odd. Why would you sit in front of your monitor screen with a strategy guide in your hand? Why would you need to? You don't take a hint book into a movie, do you? That's just a convention that evolved because the audience for adventure games has, until now, been rather insular, and the designs themselves were limited by technology. The technological barriers are falling on every side, so why not explore other ways of creating an interactive experience, with designs that seek to embrace the widest possible audience rather than just "preach to the choir." Look at how successful *The Sims* has been! That design broke radically with gaming conventions, and people loved it.

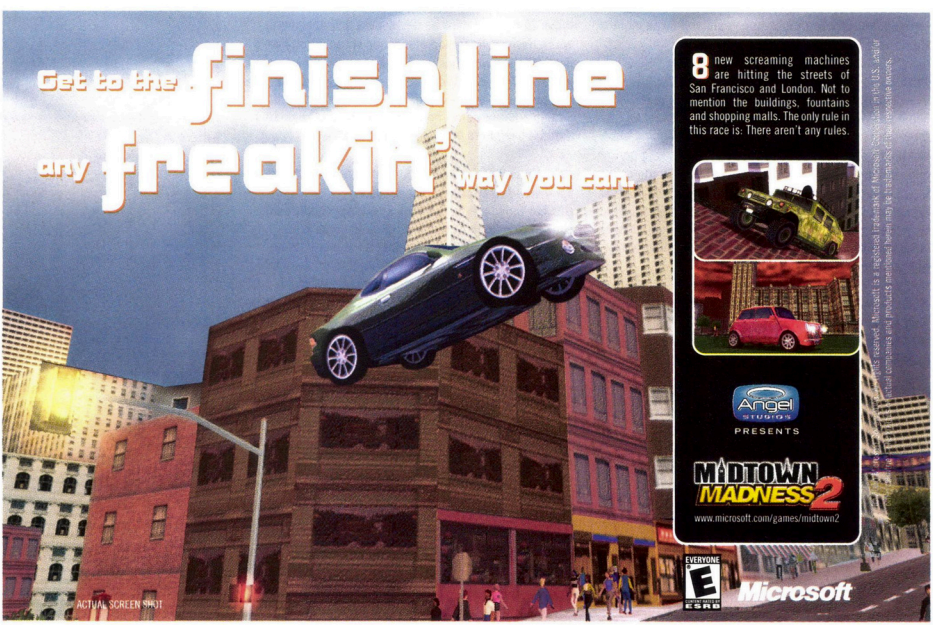
PCG: You did take a stab at game design back in the mid-'80s, but didn't return to the genre until recently. Why the long hiatus?

MC: My first game, *Amazon*, tried to break out of the text mold and be more graphically intensive — I wanted to go one step beyond *Zork*, if you will. But I found the experience frustrating because the technology was just too limited. But about four years ago, I started getting interested again. I thought, Hey, this looks like it's becoming an interesting sandbox in which to play! I enjoyed *Half-Life* and *Quake II*, and then came *The Sims*, which I consider a wonderful electronic doll house. Whatever it is, it taps into a deep need for a lot of people.

PCG: What are your thoughts on the whole violence-in-gaming argument?

MC: I looked very carefully into the statistics, and didn't find a shred of scientific evidence that games contribute to violent behavior — not a shred. In fact, since the introduction of electronic games, juvenile crime has steadily gone down. On the other hand, there are aesthetic considerations — people are sick and tired of over-exposure when it comes to gore and sex and language in popular culture. Those are basically cheap thrills, and their use has definitely reached a point of diminishing returns. People are really drawn to action and suspense, tension and release — and those qualities require a lot more thought and creativity than many authors, directors, or game designers are willing or able to provide. That's how you engage a mass audience and keep them coming back for more — not by slaughtering a large number of victims, but by telling really good stories and sweeping people along with them.

Look, everybody knows you can use this technology to point-and-shoot. Isn't it time to go beyond that and find out all the other wonderful, exciting, entertaining things it can also do?



PCG CONTEST

WIN ALL THREE *BLAIR WITCH* GAMES!

This month, we're giving away five packages containing all three *Blair Witch* games, with each game signed by its development team. If you want in, send an email to *eyewitness@pcgamer.com* with "Witching Contest" in the subject heading and tell us what the scariest game you've ever played is. We'll randomly pick five winners to receive signed copies of all three *Blair Witch* games.

Be sure to include your address so that we'll know where to send the prizes. All entries must be received by Jan. 31, 2000. One entry per person. See additional contest rules on page 44.

ALL ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY JANUARY 31, 2001. ONLY ONE ENTRY PER PERSON. INCLUDE YOUR ADDRESS IN THE ENTRY SO WE HAVE SOMEPLACE TO SEND THE PRIZE IF YOU WIN! SEE ADDITIONAL CONTEST RULES ON PAGE 48.

The Latest on *WarCraft III*

What's the wait? Are the designers too ambitious? Blizzard speaks.

As gamers everywhere wait quiveringly for No. 3 in the megahot RTS series, we pitched Blizzard some of the questions we've been tossing lately here at *PC Gamer*. And Producer Bill Roper gave us the goods.

PCG: Why is* WarCraft III *taking so long?

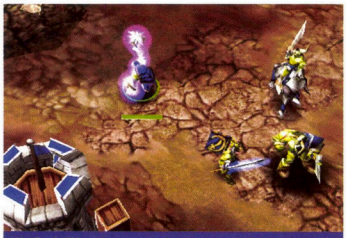
Bill Roper: It's challenging, because what we want to make and what people want to play are getting bigger and more complex. For example, we originally wanted *Diablo II* to be about four times bigger than the original, and it eventually became about seven times bigger. Everyone wants the best support on the best 3D cards; you want to deliver so much to the player that it becomes a huge project. *WarCraft II* took 11 months to develop, and *StarCraft* took two years and three months. Games are just bigger now.

PCG: Do you think that the technical expectations for* WarCraft III *may be too high when it comes out?

BR: If you're starting a game right now, and it takes three years to develop, what are computers going to be like when you're finished? Even if you're working on the most cutting-edge technology today, how are you going to tell how your game will look in three years? When we first started *Diablo II* we had no idea that cards like the GeForce 2 and Voodoo5 would be out. The ultimate goal is for a game to be fun, engaging, and addicting, not to use the latest graphics technology.

PCG: Do you think you'll eventually have to scale back your plans for* WarCraft III*?

BR: You can look at *Diablo II* and say that we could go from 30 skills and spells to 20 skills and spells and make those 20 cooler. I think as developers and designers, we're hesitant to cut too much, and when we say we'll have 30, 30 is what people will expect, and they may be let down if we cut them. People should realize that if we do scale back, you're not getting less of a game, you're getting a better game. You just need to have some trust that the designers are doing what's best for the game.



***WarCraft III* is due out sometime during the first half of 2001.**

PCG: Do you feel some sort of pressure to continue a franchise just because it's successful?

BR: The biggest thing we look at is what makes sense. Look at *StarCraft*. At the time, the team was kinda burned out on *WarCraft*: they loved the world, they loved the characters, but they wanted to do something completely different. It really depends on what the creative juices of the team direct them toward. We're in no way tied to just making a game in one of our three existing universes. Sometimes we don't want to do *WarCraft*, we want to do something else.

PC GAMER

RECOMMENDS

Great games with which to ring in the New Year.

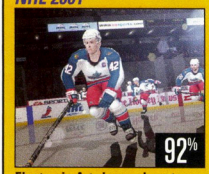
STAR TREK VOYAGER: ELITE FORCE

***Half-Life* meets *Star Trek* in this excellent first-person shooter.**

BALDUR'S GATE II

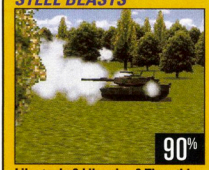
Best roleplaying game ever? It just might be.

NHL 2001



Electronic Arts knows how to make sports games, and it shows.

STEEL BEASTS



Like tanks? Like sims? Then this one's for you.

THE PCG NEWS TICKER

***EverQuest*, the super-successful online roleplaying game from Verant, has exceeded the 300,000-subscriber mark. A second add-on pack, dubbed *The Scars of Velious*, is due out by the time this issue hits the stands.**

***StarTopia*, from Mucky Foot, has been delayed. Originally due at the end of 2000, the game has been pushed back to early 2001. The design team is using the added time to tweak the game and perfect the play-balancing.**

Interplay should be ecstatic that its hit roleplaying game *Baldur's Gate II: The Shadows of Amn*, has made $4 million in its first few weeks of release, making it their best-selling game ever. You can find our review of *BGII* in our December issue.

Westwood has shipped more than 1 million units of Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2. This makes the popular sequel Westwood's biggest launch ever. Be sure to check out our review of the game in this issue.

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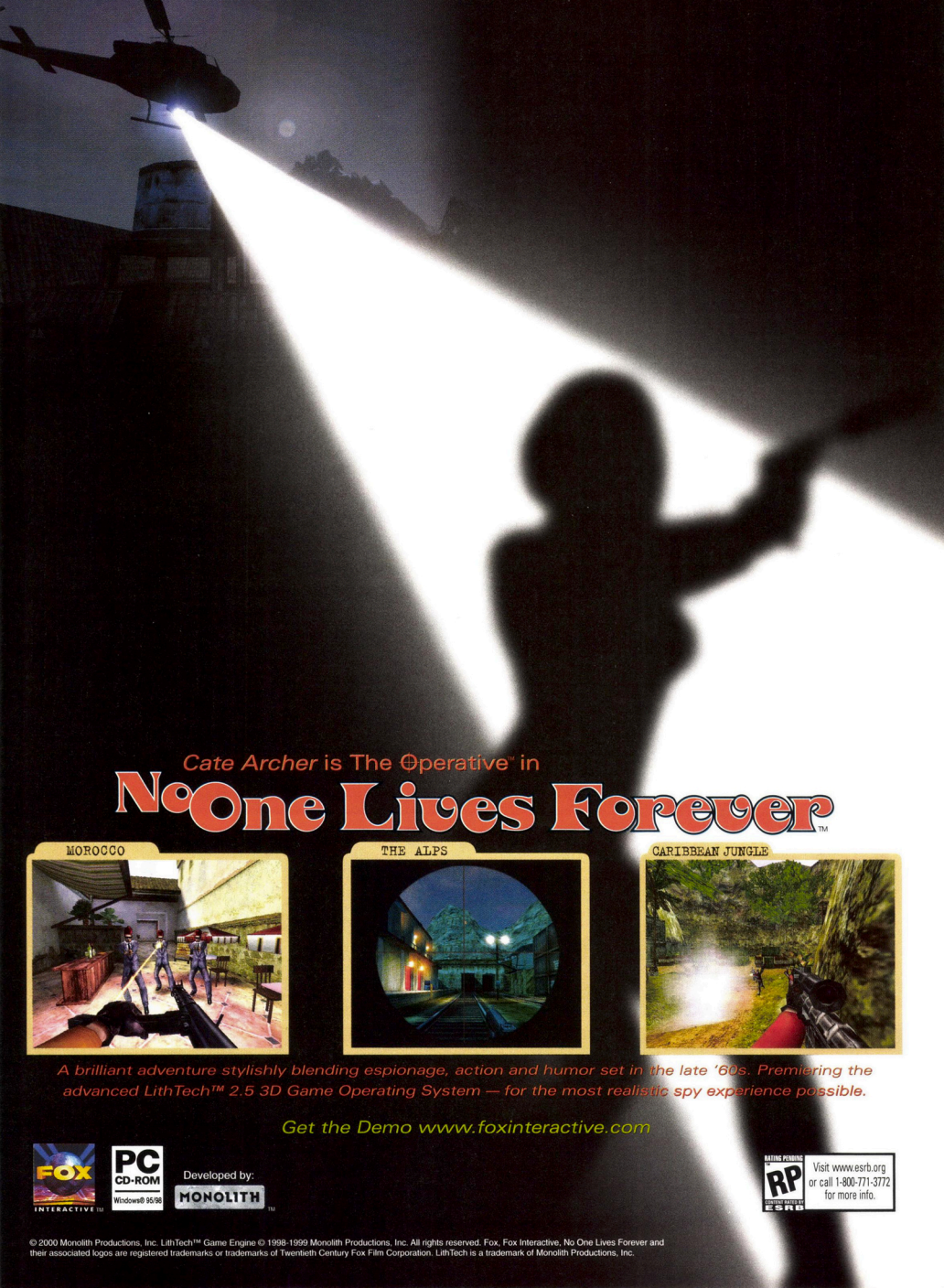
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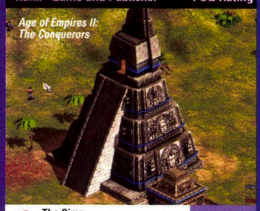
NOW AND THEN

The Top-Selling Games Today...



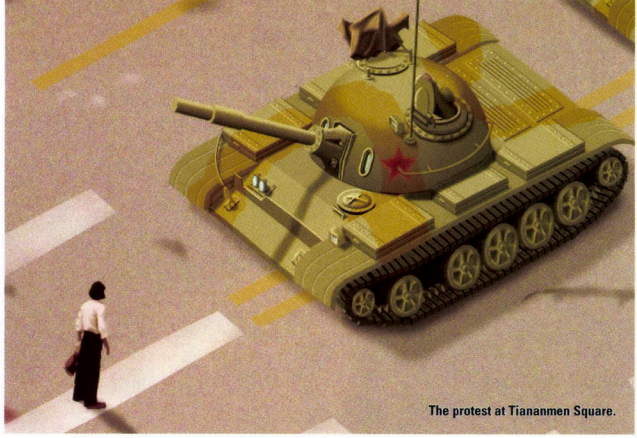
Rank	Game and Publisher	PCG Rating
1	The Sims Electronic Arts	96%
2	The Sims: Livin' Large Electronic Arts	85%
3	MS Combat Flight Simulator Microsoft	85%
4	Roller Coaster Tycoon Hasbro Interactive	89%
5	Age of Empires II: Conquerors Microsoft	93%
6	Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn Interplay	91%
7	Barbie Pet Rescue Mattel Interactive	N/A
8	Diablo II Havas Interactive	94%
9	RCT: Loopy Landscapes Hasbro Interactive	74%
10	Age of Empires II: Age of Kings Microsoft	94%

Source: PC Data • Stats are for Oct. 15-21, 2000

...And This Time Five Years Ago

Rank	Game and Publisher	PCG Rating
1	Myst Mattel Interactive	95%
2	Hexen GT Interactive	85%
3	Stonekeep Interplay	77%
4	Doom II GT Interactive	90%
5	Phantasmagoria Havas Interactive	88%
6	Star Wars: Dark Forces LucasArts	92%
7	Ultimate Doom GT Interactive	N/A
8	MS Flight Simulator Microsoft	N/A
9	MechWarrior 2 Activision	93%
10	Monopoly Hasbro Interactive	90%

Source: PC Data • Stats are for October 1995



The protest at Tiananmen Square.

Gaming Art

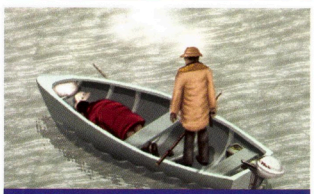
Controversial game art appears in Arizona

An artist named Jon Haddock has created a series of images for an art project called Screenshots. As its name implies, Screenshots uses a style of art seen in videogames to illustrate a variety of events. The computer illustrations are of both historical and fictional events, and each bears a striking resemblance to *The Sims*. Some images are shocking, such as those of the Rodney King beating or the Columbine tragedy, while others are more light-hearted, showing scenes from *The Sound of Music* or other classic films. All the illustrations were created using Photoshop. To view more images from the collection, point your browser to *http://www.whitelead.com/jrh/screenshots*.

Twelve Angry Men.

The assassination of Lee Harvey Oswald.

Many of the images are depictions of recent events.



The Godfather, Part II. Poor Fredo.

THE PCG NEWS TICKER

Stephen Poole, one of our contributing editors, has just written a book about gaming titled *Trigger Happy: Video Games and the Entertainment Revolution*. It's currently on sale for a list price of $25.95, and can be found at Amazon.com and other retailers.

Sierra is giving away *Ground Control: Dark Conspiracy*, an add-on to *Ground Control*. Anyone who buys *Ground Control* can send in for a free copy of the expansion pack. For more details, visit *www.darkconspiracy.sierra.com*.

Aspiring game designers may be interested in a new book called *Eberly's 3D Game Engine Design: A Practical Approach to Real-Time Computer Graphics*. It covers game creation, design, and more. See *www.magic-software.com* for more information.

Burns Games has announced that it's currently developing a title called *The Game of Death*, in which gamers play a car-accident victim who is in a coma. To wake up, he must face a collection of real-world serial killers such as Jeffrey Dahmer and Ted Bundy.

www.DailyRadar.com

GREAT GAMES YOU'VE NEVER PLAYED

A look at small-time games that deserve big-time attention. Here's where we give the "Independent" game industry a chance to be seen. If you know of any recent games that belong here, send an email to *eyewitness@pcgamer.com* with "Ever Heard Of?" in the subject heading.

European War: Cossacks

- **Developer: CDV**
- **Find it at: *http://www.cossacks.de/english/cossacks***

At first glance, it's easy to dismiss *European Wars: Cossacks* as an *Age of Empires* clone. This may be true, but in keeping with the metaphor, this is a more advanced, better-looking, and perhaps even better-playing clone of one of the best real-time strategy games ever made. The simplest way to be immediately impressed by *Cossacks* is through numbers. *Age of Empires II* allows a maximum of a few hundred units in a level; *Cossacks* can have up to 8,000 units. It also features 16 different nations, and each with a distinct look and style. Units will have up to 64 phases of animation (that's phases, not frames). At the foundation of these features is a true 3D terrain. Grenades will roll down hills, and elevation will seriously impact the outcome of battles.

Cossacks is played from the usual fixed isometric perspective reserved for real-time strategy games and features some slick graphics. It takes place during the 17th and 18th centuries, which means horses, muskets, and pikemen rather than dragons and mages. You'll be able to play as (deep breath) Algeria, Austria, England, France, Netherlands, Piemonte, Poland, Portugal, Prussia, Russia, Saxony, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, and Venice. The game is currently being developed by a German company called CDV. It's not out yet, but a you can download a demo of it at *www.cossacks.de/english/cossacks*.

Think of *Cossacks* as *Shogun* meets *Age of Empires II*.

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ZIPPER INTERACTIVE

TEEN T ESRB

Animated Violence
Use of Alcohol

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→ Triumph leather jacket
→ *No One Lives Forever* PC game and official gear

SECOND PRIZE (10) Approx. Retail Value: $250

→ Dr. Martens shoes
→ *No One Lives Forever* PC game and official gear

THIRD PRIZE (40) Approx. Retail Value: $250

→ Microsoft's SideWinder Game Voice hardware and software
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→ WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE VILLAIN FROM A SPY FILM?

_____

All entries must be emailed or mailed separately and received by 11:59 PM ET February 9, 2001, when the sweepstakes ends. Limit one (1) entry per person.

OFFICIAL RULES
NO ONE LIVES FOREVER SPY SWEEPSTAKES

1. NO PURCHASE OR ONLINE ACCESS NECESSARY: You may enter one of two ways: 1. To enter via mail, complete by hand your name, address, and telephone number, and tell us "Who is your favorite villain from a spy film?" on the Official Entry Form or on a 3" x 5" piece of paper, then mail in an envelope with proper postage to: No One Lives Forever Sweepstakes, P.O. Box 2012, Westport, CT 06881-2012. 2. You may also enter the sweepstakes by navigating the Internet to www.foxinteractive.com/contest, then click on the No One Lives Forever Sweepstakes link. Provide your name, address, telephone number, and email address, and tell us "Who is your favorite villain from a spy film?" on the Official Entry Form. Send your entry by clicking on the Sweepstakes submit link on the Sweepstakes page. All entries must be emailed or mailed separately and received by 11:59 PM ET February 9, 2001, when the sweepstakes ends. Limit one (1) entry per person.
2. SELECTION OF WINNER/VALIDATIONS: Winners will be selected at random on or about February 19, 2001, from all valid entries by an independent judging organization whose decisions are final on all aspects of the sweepstakes. To be declared a winner, any Canadian resident selected in the drawing will be required to correctly answer without assistance of any kind, whether mechanical or other, a time-limited mathematical question. The question will be administered by telephone at a mutually convenient time. By taking part in this sweepstakes, entrants agree to be bound by these Official Rules and all decisions of the judging organization. Potential winners will be notified by e-mail and/or mail and shall be required to sign, notarize and return within 7 days of delivery to his/her address an Affidavit of Eligibility, Prize and Publicity Releases, unless prohibited by law. Grand Prizewinner and their travel companion must also sign and return a Travel Release. Failure to sign and return these forms within the time requested may result in forfeiture of prize and the selection of an alternate winner. No responsibility is assumed for lost, stolen, late, or misdirected mail, problems with electronic transmissions, the internet, technical, hardware, or software failures of any kind, lost or unavailable network connections, or any injury or damage to any computer. Sponsor reserves the right to cancel the sweepstakes if any computer files become infected with a virus or if the sweepstakes is otherwise technically corrupted. Entries void if incomplete, not legible, or if they contain errors. All submissions become the property of Twentieth Century Fox Interactive, the Sponsor of this promotion.
3.PARTICIPATION: Sweepstakes begins 12/01/00, ends 02/09/01, and is open to residents of the 50 United States plus Washington, D.C., and Canada, except the Province of Quebec 18 years of age or older. Employees and immediate families of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, PC Gamer magazine, CCS International Limited, Triumph Inc., Dr. Martens AIRWAIR USA LLC, Microsoft, Inc., their subsidiaries, affiliates, promotion agencies and anyone involved in this promotion's production, development or handling are not eligible. Acceptance of prize constitutes consent to use winners names and likeness for editorial, advertising and publicity purposes without further compensation, except where prohibited. By entering, each participant agrees to release, discharge and hold harmless Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, PC Gamer magazine, CCS International Limited, Triumph Inc., Dr. Martens AIRWAIR USA LLC, Microsoft, Inc., their subsidiaries, affiliates, advertising, and promotional agencies from all claims, damages, liabilities, injuries and expenses arising out of his/her participation in this Sweepstakes and/or acceptance, use and/or misuse of any prize. Void in Puerto Rico, and where prohibited. All Federal, state and local laws and regulations apply.
4.PRIZES AND ODDS: The following prizes will be awarded: One (1) Grand Prize: Winner's choice of a 4-day/3-night trip for two (2) to New York City, NY or Los Angeles, CA. Grand Prize includes round-trip coach air transportation for two between New York or Los Angeles and major airport nearest winner's home; 3-nights deluxe hotel accommodations (double occupancy); a demonstration of CCS products with experts at the Counter Spy Shop in either New York or LA and a $5,000 Counter Spy Shop gift certificate; and a library of spy-related videos and DVDs from Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, (approx. retail value $7,500.00). Four (4) First Prizes: Prize includes a Triumph jacket, a No One Lives Forever game and merchandise (approx. retail value $360.00). Ten (10) Second Prizes: A pair of Dr. Martens Classics # 1460, plus a No One Lives Forever game (approx. retail value $145.00). Forty (40) Third Prizes: A No One Lives Forever game and merchandise, plus a Microsoft SideWinder Game Voice ERP (approx. retail value $125.00). No substitution or transfer of prize except with Sponsor's permission or where required by law. Travel is subject to availability and certain blackout dates may apply. Winner must notify Sponsor of travel destination (i.e., New York or Los Angeles) at least 30 days prior to travel. Travel must be completed by 08/31/01 with a Saturday night stay to take advantage of the Counter Spy Shop product demonstration. Odds of winning depend on the number of valid entries received. Limit one prize per person. If prize becomes unavailable, sponsor may award a substitute of equal or greater value. All Federal, state and local taxes are the sole responsibility of winners. Allow 6-8 weeks after validation for receipt of prize.
5. Prize Winner List: Visit www.foxinteractive.com after 02/28/00 for the names of the prize winners or mail a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: No One Lives Forever Winners, P.O. Box 640, Wilton, CT 06897 (VT residents may omit return postage) by 02/28/00.

WINNERS

Without further delay, we present the winners of the *Deus Ex* contest.

THE FIRST-PRIZE WINNERS

Nick Tenaglio
Douglas G. Poppenger
Chris J. Gittings
Kelii Gurfield
Julia Lisovich

These lucky winners will each receive a copy of *Deus Ex*, plus a *Deus Ex* poster autographed by the development team.

THE SECOND-PLACE WINNERS

Jerry L. Lerman
Gray Ilaria
Thomas T. Mix
Dennis Smith
Charles Perry

They'll each get a copy of *Deus Ex*. Don't forget to check out this month's contest on page 36.

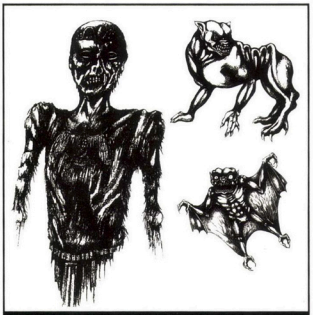
DESIGN LAB

Snipe Hunt

BY: Jramir FROM: Los Angeles, CA CATEGORY: Action

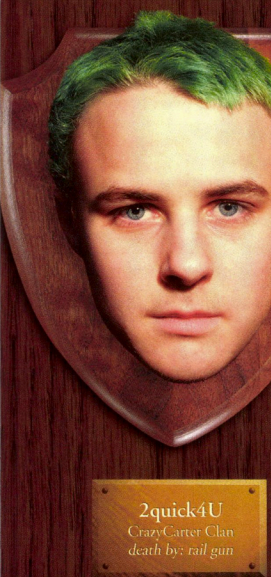
This game is about the men who keep the reality of myths and legends suppressed from the public to avoid mass hysteria. Their "Organization" has been around since the 12th century, and you are a member. Your primary job is to work with your team to destroy creatures that have been shrouded in myths throughout history. You'll have to track werewolves in Bolivia, search tombs in Egypt for mummies, and eliminate vampires in Romania.

Snipe Hunt is a combination first-person shooter and roleplaying game, similar to *Deus Ex*. You'll have to conduct research on new creatures to learn their strengths and weaknesses and discover the most effective way to dispatch them. As in *X-COM*, you'll work with a squad who'll help you out during missions. You can issue them orders and hire new members when they're killed off. The game will also have many bosses. And during missions, you'll have to watch out for innocent civilians.



While its title is a bit lacking, this supernatural take on *X-COM* is a cool idea.

Got a great game idea of your own? Send them in to eyewitness@pcgamer.com *with "Design Lab" in the subject heading, and we may just print your idea!*



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WAITING IS THE **HARDEST PART**

Looks like those *Tribes 2* fans are fully entrenched as their game continues to hold the No. 1 spot. Cast your vote by sending an email to *eyewitness@pcgamer.com*. Put "Waiting is the Hardest Part" in the subject heading and tell us what upcoming game you just can't wait for. Each month we'll randomly pick one lucky winner to win a game from our shelf of gaming goodness. Remember, one entry per month, per household. This month's winner is Sean Mead, who cast his vote for *Tribes 2*. See additional rules on the bottom of this page.

1. Tribes 2 .....20%
2. Ultima Worlds Online: Origin 14%
3. WarCraft III 9%
4. Black & White 8%
5. Shadowbane 6%
6. Team Fortress 2 .....5%
7. Duke Nukem Forever ..3%
8. Halo 3%
9. Neverwinter Nights ..2%
10. Max Payne 2%

THE **PCG** RELEASE METER

A new year means 12 months of new games, and what a great 12 months those will be. Thanks go to Rich LaPorte for compiling this partial list for us. Remember to send any news about release dates to *laporte@gonegold.com*. Also, be sure to check out *www.gonegold.com* for the latest release dates.

TITLE	PUBLISHER	DATE	PROGNOSIS
December			
MechWarrior 4	Microsoft	12/01/00	Hopes are high
Echelon	Bethesda	12/03/00	Should make it
EverQuest: Scars of Velious	Verant	12/05/00	Should be
Starfleet Command II	Interplay	12/06/00	Very possible
Giants	Interplay	12/06/00	We'll see
American McGee's Alice	EA	12/06/00	Later
Chicken Run	Eidos	12/06/00	Should hatch
Reno Air Racing	Broderbund	12/06/00	Possible delay
Riddle of the Sphinx	DreamCatcher	12/06/00	Sands say yes
I'm Going In	Eidos	12/08/00	Probable
NBA Live 2001	EA Sports	12/13/00	About now
PGA Champion 2K Titanium	Sierra	12/16/00	Four sure
Tribes 2	Sierra	12/19/00	We hope so
Airline Tycoon	Interplay	12/31/00	Should be
January			
U.S. Open 2000	Empire	01/02/01	Most likely
Battle of Britain	Empire	01/02/01	Super
Stunt GP	GT Software	01/08/01	About now
Arcatera	Ubi Soft	01/10/01	Hopes are high
Monopoly Tycoon	Hasbro	01/10/01	Chance Card says yes
Loose Cannon	Microsoft	01/12/01	Most likely
Icewind Dale: Heart of Winter	Interplay	01/18/01	Probable
B-17 Flying Fortress	Hasbro	01/25/01	Looks good. Finally.
Arcanum: Steamworks	Sierra	01/30/01	Hopefully
Age of Sail II	TalonSoft	01/31/01	Should make it
Simsville	Maxis	01/31/01	More time

CONTEST **RULES**

No purchase is necessary, and only one entry per household, per month, will be counted. Anyone can vote, but only U.S. residents are eligible to win prizes, and the offer is void in FL, RI, Puerto Rico, and where prohibited by law. Your chances of winning depend on the number of entries we receive.

THE PCG NEWS TICKER

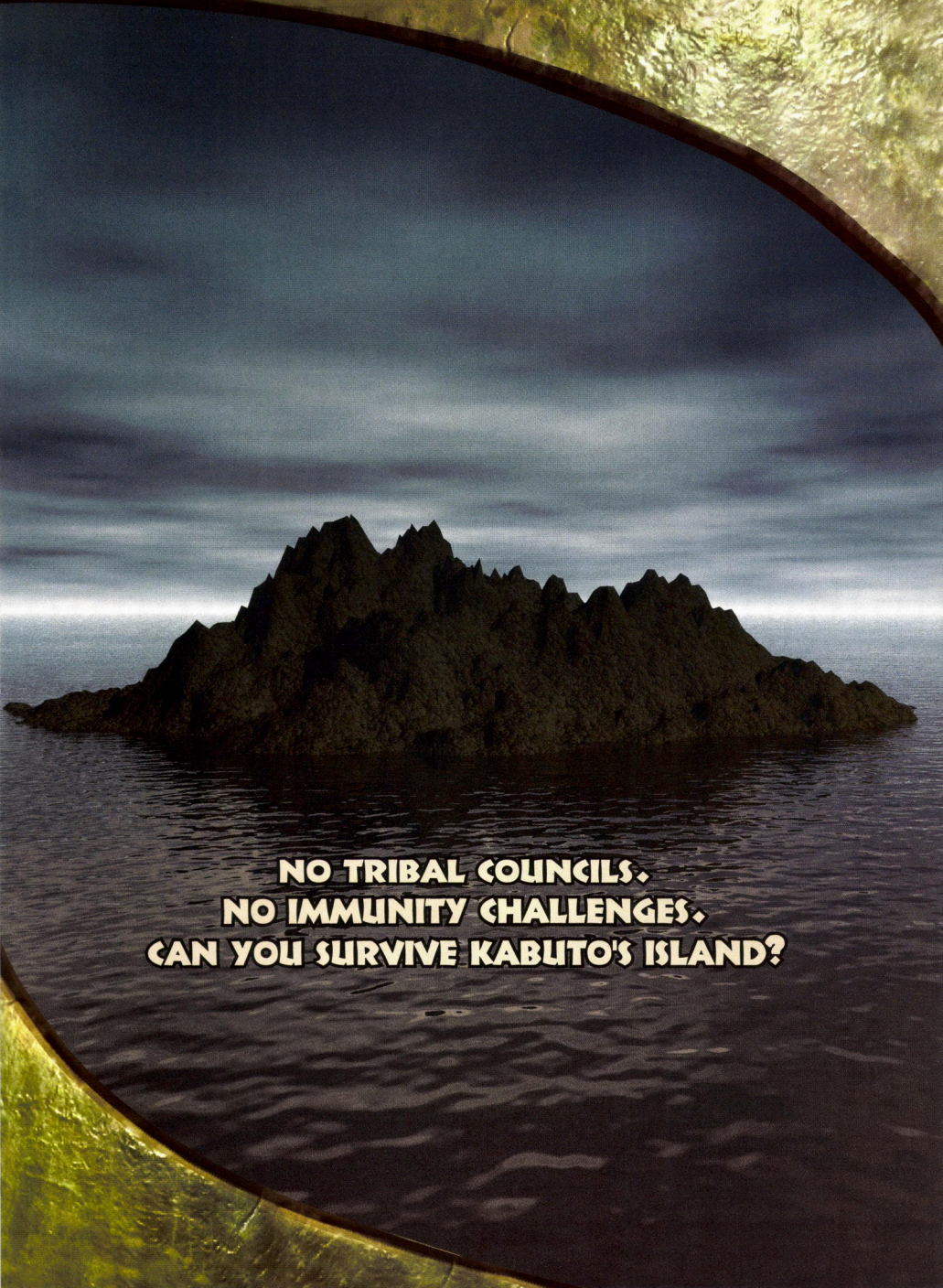
The Bitmap Brothers, creators of the real-time strategy game *Z*, have changed the name of their sequel, *ZZ*, to *Z: Steel Soldiers*. One of the reasons for the change was to prevent potential problems with BMW since the company has a car called the Z3.

LucasArts is releasing a new game pack called *Star Wars: X-Wing Trilogy*. The bundle will include *X-Wing*, *TIE Fighter*, and *X-Wing Alliance*, plus a sample of *X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter*. This is the second time LucasArts has released an *X-Wing* collection.

Deus Ex has been awarded **PC Game of the Year** by the **British Academy of Film and Television**. The popular action/roleplaying game has met with very high acclaim since its release earlier this year, including an Editors' Choice Award from *PC Gamer*.

A few issues ago, we reported on how an online roleplaying game called *Horizons* was seriously in need of financial funding. Since then, **Artifact Entertainment**, the developer, has found support through various private investors.

www.DailyRadar.com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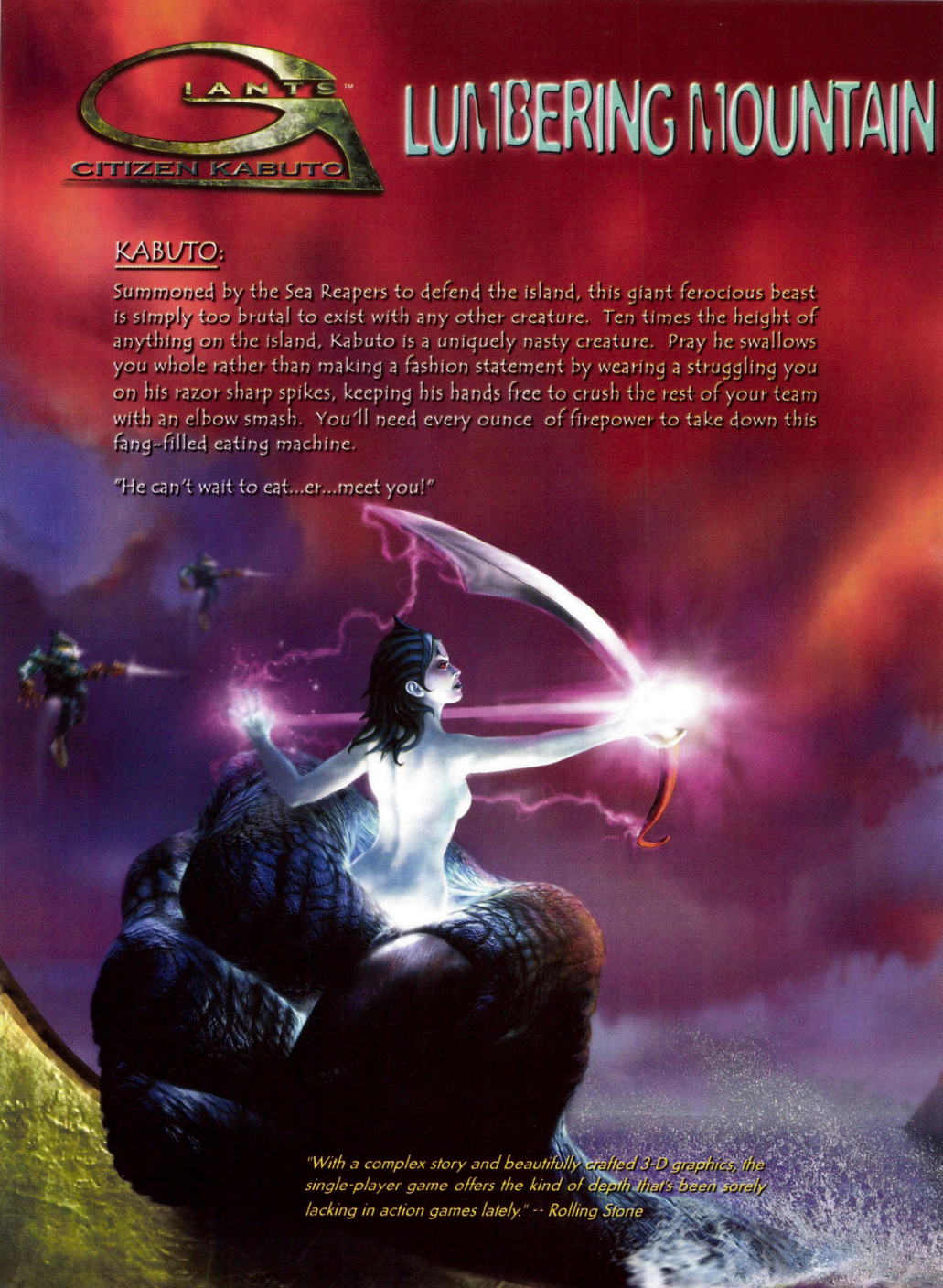
CAN YOU SURVIVE KABUTO'S ISLAND?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THE PCG PLAYLIST

It's good to be a gamer. Thanks to the holiday season, we've got plenty of quality games to cuddle up with. Between *Red Alert 2*, new *Team Fortress Classic* levels, *Escape From Monkey Island*, and *Baldur's Gate II*, our free time is spent in gaming bliss on the best gaming platform ever created. God bless the PC.

ROB I'm taking some time from my busy schedule as Surveyor From the Gaming Mount to enjoy some *Red Alert 2*. Pimpin' Mike Salmon at *RA2* is a very sweet pleasure — you should try it sometime. Thankfully, my yearly fix of *FIFA* soccer is also being satiated as the latest from EA gets some serious playtesting.

COREY Now that *Trek* games are good again (well, some of them), I've been phasering it up in *Elite Force* and test-flying the *Starfleet Command II* beta. *EF* holomatch is an action-game/*Trek* fan's dream; and since most of the *Voyager* characters blow, I just love shooting them over and over again.

DAN *FireArms* for *Half-Life* continues to rule all terrestrial land masses, and the cosmos as well. But I'm also making time for my boys, the San Jose Sharks, in a full season of *NHL 2001*. And I've been enjoying the classic fun of the *Aliens TC* mod for *Doom*, which is just as scary as I'd remembered it.

CHUCK Since my unfortunate decision to upgrade to the 1.25 beta version of *Quake III* turned to tragedy — and killed all mod support — my *QIII* playing has been stifled. However, I've found respite in, of all places, *Red Alert 2*. I suck at it, and my old boss from *PCXL*, Mike "Cheap" Salmon, kicks my ass every day, but I still love playing.

LI I've been playing *No One Lives Forever* and *Red Alert 2*. I'm trying to get a cooperative game of *Baldur's Gate II* going, too. I've also managed to put some quality time into *Metal Gear Solid*. I just love playing with the stealth camouflage suit. Few things are more fun than sneaking up on a genome soldier and planting a brick of C4 on his back.

JEREMY There may have been some exaggeration surrounding *Tony Hawk 2* as the "best game ever," but I've thoroughly enjoyed it. I'm not about to go catch the PlayStation 2 wave, but it's a good game nonetheless. Besides that, I'm playing my guitar and bongos in preparation for my solo tour. Around my living room.

JOE Well, it's back to *Team Fortress Classic* after a month off with *Firearms*. I forgot how much fun it was. Trying to get through a season in *NHL 2001* is still keeping me busy, but did they have to make the New York Rangers suck so badly? Plus, I finished all of the *Covert Ops* missions in about an hour.

CHIAKI Must get out of this place! I roam everywhere and kill everything that crosses my path but the key still eludes me — damn Irenicus and his dark lair. This is my first serious attempt at an RPG (excluding hanging out with my little brother's D&D pals), and it's proving to be fantastic fun. *Baldur's Gate II* is my new nemesis!

GREG As much as I hate to admit it, I've been playing a lot of new games on my PS2. That's right, I waited in line for 18 hours the day before launch until I was able to make my purchase at 1:30 a.m. on Oct. 26. So far I've been having the most fun with *SSX*. But don't worry, kiddies, I'll be back on my PC quicker than you can say "*Fantavision*."

The *Third Dawn* expansion pack will make *Ultima Online* look and play better than ever.

The Third Coming

New *Ultima Online* add-on on its way

Players of *Ultima Online* are about to get a huge treat, thanks to the goodly folks over at Origin. *Ultima Online: Third Dawn* is the latest addition to the *Ultima Online* world, and it's more than just your average expansion pack. *Third Dawn* adds 200 fully motion-captured 3D characters with a total of 700 animations. It also introduces a new 3D terrain system and a new particle system for spells, and even improves the music and sound effects. These features should give *Ultima Online* a huge boost in terms of graphical beauty.

All this new technical stuff may be nice, but it isn't much without new gameplay elements. That's why Origin has also added new creatures to slay, new lands to explore, and plenty of new weapons and armor to drool over. The developers even included a set of armor and weapons that sport an Eastern samurai look. So far, we haven't received any details on what the new creatures and lands will be, but we'll let you know as soon as we find out. *Ultima Online: Third Dawn* should be hitting store shelves by the time you finish reading this very sentence.

In other *Ultima Online* news, the first *Ultima Online* World Faire has just wrapped up in Austin, Texas. Attendees were able to meet the developers of *UO*, see the premiere of *Ultima Online: Third Dawn*, get a sneak peek at *Ultima Worlds Online: Origin*, participate in workshops, panels, and roundtable discussions, and basically have fun with thousands of fellow gamers from all around the world. With all the recent events surrounding the *Ultima* universe, we just can't wait to see how *Ultima Worlds Online: Origin* turns out.

NEXT MONTH

The Land of the Free, the Home of the Brave

The world is a dangerous place, with weapons of mass destruction pointed at ideological enemies. World War II has been depicted in numerous games over the years — in first-person with *Wolfenstein 3D*, on hex boards with *Panzer General*, and in the air and on the water with *European Air War* and *Silent Service*. Many of these games' formats are heading back. Yep, Fritz is in for another ass-whuppin' courtesy of our brave gaming boys and the new shooters, flyers, and strategy games coming out in 2001. Next issue, we offer an exhaustive round-up of all the games that give you the chance to give the Nazis some well-deserved payback.

Plus, we cover all the new ways to defend your freedoms in squad-based games — the latest hot gaming property.

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Nobody gets
Command and Conquer:
Red Alert 2 before we do.
Nobody gets
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
before we do.
Nobody gets
American McGee's Alice before we do.
Nobody gets
Diablo II: Exclusive Gift Set
before we do.
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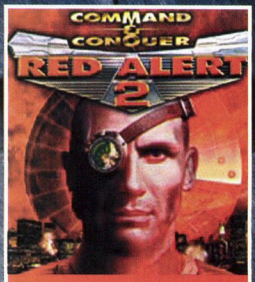
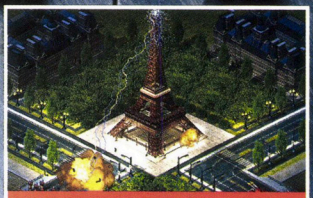
COMMAND & CONQUER RED ALERT 2

There's A Commie Pulling Into Your Driveway.

"**Red Alert 2**'s opening movie comes complete with our spacious skies filled with para-trooping Russians, lumbering Soviet airships and Evil Empire missiles pluming Commie contrails. The post-alternate-history-WWII defeat of the Soviet Empire has boomeranged on Fortress America in a big way: After decades of rebuilding the Reds are back to deliver the crushing blow. This time the battlefields are locales such as NYC, Washington, D.C., Texas and Ohio. So hang tight, stock up on vodka and hang around upbeat cheery people who'll assuage those subconscious fears of a Soviet invasion." — **DailyRadar.com**



Machine: PC **Publisher:** Electronic Arts
Genre: Strategy **Available:** Now



The Soviets roll on the Eiffel Tower.

Red Alert 2 boasts new features specifically designed to speed the pace of gameplay.

An offshore flotilla attempts to reduce a US base to rubble.

Broadcast messages to all players within a game with Microsoft's Voice Commander.

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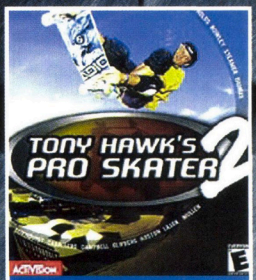
Your Shirt Is Off And Your Pants Are Down Below Your Hips.

How Much More Fun Can You Possibly Have?

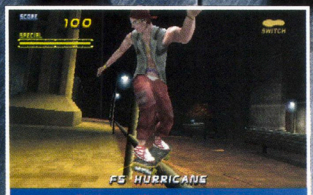
"Here it is, the sequel you've been waiting for. There are two massive changes to the way the game plays. The first, and more subtle of the two, is the enhanced career mode. In the first game, you simply earned videotapes to progress through the game, unlocking secrets and opening up levels. In this sequel, the emphasis is on cash. You still have to achieve the same type of weird goals, but these are each worth money. The second update, and the thing that guarantees that this is the greatest experience to date, is Create-a-Park. With **Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2**, the possibilities are wide open – just like your mouth when you pull your first 900." – **DailyRadar.com**



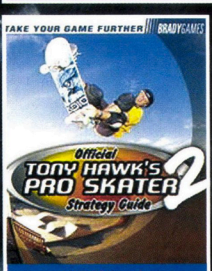
Machine: PC **Publisher:** Activision
Genre: Action/Sports **# of Players:** 2
Available: Now

Tony Hawk promises new parks, courses, tricks and skaters.

Players can create skateparks on the fly using this killer skatepark editor.



Better graphics and new moves pump up the already great gameplay.



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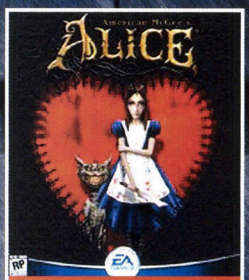
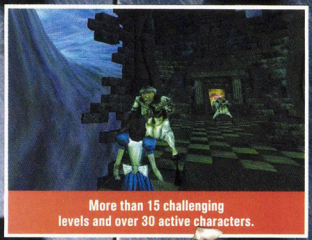
American McGee's Alice

She's So Bad It Sorta Tingles.



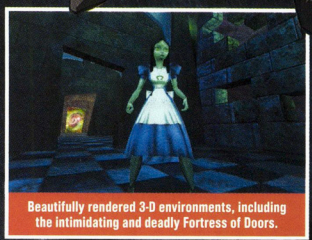
Machine: PC **Publisher:** Electronic Arts
Genre: Action/Adventure **# of Players:** 1
Release date: December, 2000

"Although it's not always a formula for success, **American McGee's Alice** takes it's name from former id Software level designer American McGee. The game, loosely based on Alice in Wonderland, is a Dali-esque surreal twist on the classic tale. Using the Quake 3: Arena engine, this action title will pit the player as Alice (with the Cheshire Cat as Alice's confidant and guide) through 15 levels of hellish representation of Wonderland. This is defiantly a title you'll want to get your hands on!" — **DailyRadar.com**

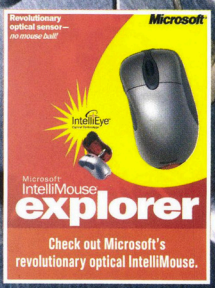


More than 15 challenging levels and over 30 active characters.

Specialized particle system for fire, smoke, fog, explosions, rain and snow.



Beautifully rendered 3-D environments, including the intimidating and deadly Fortress of Doors.



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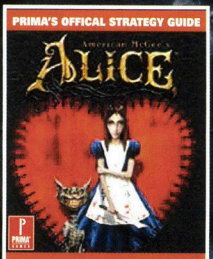
PRIMA'S OFFICAL STRATEGY GUIDE



SAVE 20% on Prima's Official Strategy Guide when you buy American McGee's Alice.

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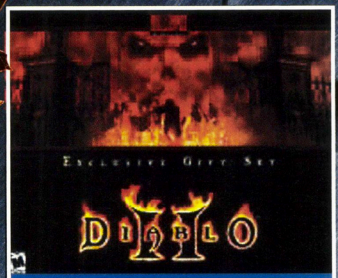
Find Your Way Home In The Dark, If You Can.

"For the holiday shopper looking for a great software gift, the **Diablo II Exclusive Gift Set** is the ultimate edition of the world's best-selling PC game. Available for a limited time only, the **Diablo II Gift Set** comes with both the Official **Diablo II** Strategy Guide from BradyGames and the Official **Diablo** Strategy Guide from Prima Publishing, a $30 value, and the full version of the award-winning first episode of the epic **Diablo** saga!"

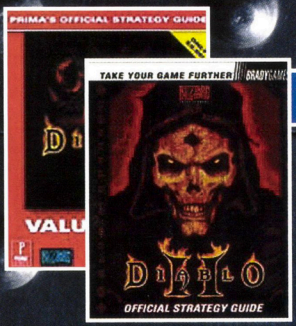


Machine: PC **Publisher:** Havas/Blizzard
Genre: RPG/Action **# of Players:** 1-8 **Available:** Now

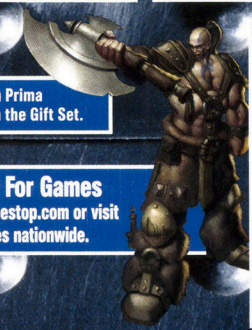
Battle Hell's minions as the Amazon, Sorceress, Necromancer, Barbarian, or Paladin.

Challenge the ultimate evil over four expansive realms.

Harness the energies of light and darkness with arcane new spells and enchantments.



Official Strategy Guides from Prima and BradyGAMES included in the Gift Set.



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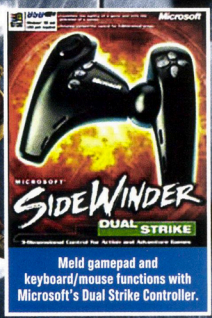

Meld gamepad and keyboard/mouse functions with Microsoft's Dual Strike Controller.

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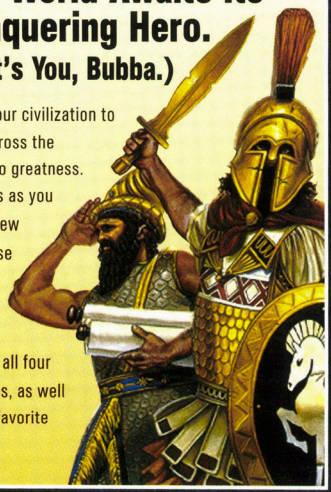
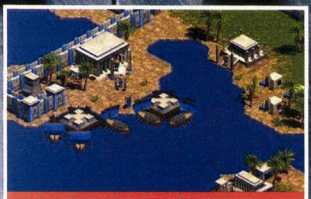
AGE of EMPIRES
COLLECTOR'S EDITION

The World Awaits Its Conquering Hero. (That's You, Bubba.)

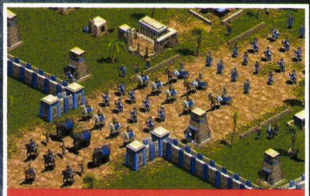


"Lead your civilization to glory across the Millennia by choosing your path to greatness. Battle alongside legendary heroes as you conquer rival empires. Discover new technologies and chart your course well – from the Stone Age to the Imperial Age – and your legacy shall live forever! **The Age of Empires Collectors Edition** includes all four award-winning **Age of Empires** titles, as well as a music-filled CD with all your favorite **Age of Empires** tracks."

Machine: PC **Publisher:** Microsoft
Genre: Strategy **# of Players:** 1-8 **Available:** Now

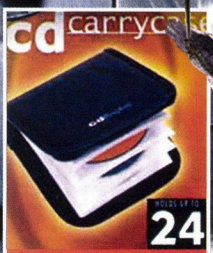


Choose from many different multi-tribe scenarios, each with one or more victory conditions.



Real-time action. Your decisions count, so think fast and act bravely.

Command one of 12 mighty civilizations, each with unique attributes and historical richness.



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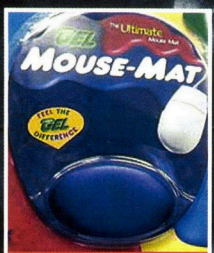

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THE ULTIMATE STRATEGY & TIPS GUIDE 2001

C&C: RED ALERT 2 56

My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to a very special event: the 6th annual *PC Gamer* Ultimate Strategy and Tips Guide. Compiled in these pages are some of the finest strategies known to man, for some of the top games of today. Hours have been spent poring over tactics, working out the best path to ease you, gentle reader, to success in your favorite game.

Of course, if all else fails, you can always cheat! To that dishonorable end we've compiled hundreds of codes, console commands, and workarounds to give you that extra helping hand.

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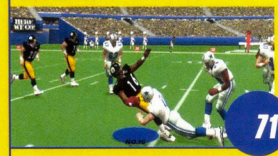
MADDEN 2001



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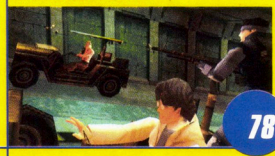
METAL GEAR SOLID



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- STAR TREK VOYAGER: ELITE FORCE
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- DEUX EX
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- HEAVY METAL F.A.K.K. 2
- ICEWIND DALE
- CRIMSON SKIES
- THE SIMS
- DARK REIGN 2
- TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2
- METAL GEAR SOLID
- GROUND CONTROL
- METAL FATIGUE
- AGE OF EMPIRES II: THE CONQUERORS

AND MORE

THE USELESS INFORMATION ABOUT THE *PC GAMER* STAFF CONTEST One of the self-indulgent facts about the *PC Gamer* staff on the following pages is not true. If you think you know which one it is, email your answer to *eyewitness@pcgamer.com* with the header USELESS INFO CONTEST. One respondent with the right answer will receive a beautiful LIMITED EDITION *Baldur's Gate II* lithograph autographed by members of the Black Isle design team. One entry per person please. Contest ends 1/31/01. See page 48 for more rules.

C&C: RED ALERT 2

Those wacky Soviets are back for a butt-kicking, and we've got a fat mission-by-mission strategy guide for winning at both the Allied and Soviet campaigns.

Use the garrisoned troops against the parachute drop and keep Tanya safe.

ALLIED MISSIONS

MISSION 1 LONE GUARDIAN

Immediately send Tanya into the water to destroy the Dreadnoughts. After the GIs kill the paratroopers take them northwest (with Tanya) from the Statue of Liberty and move through the city in a clockwise direction toward Fort Bradley. Once you reach Bradley, build a Barracks and crank out an Engineer and 20 or so GIs and head to the Soviet base. After the Engineer repairs the bridge, focus on the V3 Rocket Launchers decimating your base. Blow up the oil barrels to destroy Sentry Guns and enemy troops. When the Sentry Guns are down, advance quickly into the Soviet base and annihilate it.

MISSION 2 EAGLE DAWN

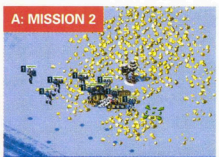
Tanya can easily take out the Flak Guns so your Rocketeers can destroy the Sentry Gun. Occupy all buildings with Engineers and begin cranking out Grizzly Tanks and GIs, and use the Rocketeers to protect your Chrono Miners from attacks by Conscripts and Rhino Tanks — but make sure they don't follow the Soviets back to their base. When you've built ten or so tanks, head in an easterly direction to the Commie base, skirt around the outside and blast down the walls near the Flak Gun. Pour in through the breach and fight to the Tesla Reactors, deploying GIs as needed to provide your tanks with extra firepower. After the reactors are down the rest is a simple mopping-up operation.

MISSION 3 HAIL TO THE CHIEF

Put GIs inside the IFVs and have the Engineer repair the Jefferson Memorial to reveal power-ups. Highlight all the GIs and grab both crates — the left one will promote them all one rank. As you build your base, send the promoted GIs to the first bridge to the east and deploy them close to the soccer field where the Soviets have a Tesla Reactor: as Flak Tracks and Conscripts attack, your men will mow 'em down and continue to be promoted. Advance by undeploying and deploying these GIs as needed and you can capture the reactor and a War Factory. Seize this War Factory before building your own, and it'll be the Primary and all vehicles will emerge from it, closer to the front lines. Capturing it also lets you build powerful Rhino tanks.

Build a sizable force of tanks and IFVs — about 10 tanks and 6 IFVs (you

Fortify the NW corner of your base against intermittent Soviet attacks.



Use Rocketeers to protect Chrono Miners from Soviet attacks.

Blast through the Soviet walls here, or go through the NE corner.

Capture the reactors and War Factory, and the battle's almost over.

www.DailyRadar.com

Hide yourself in the hedges outside the front door of the building. Wait for *PC Gamer* Art Director Joe Mitch to come outside for his hourly smoke.

Approach the Psychic Beacon from the rear and you'll bypass much of the Soviet force, ending the battle very soon.

Set up your base on the soccer field to make for easy access to the Psychic Amplifier.

This intersection is the key to a quick victory. Garrison the buildings on the corners.

Disguise your spies and send them into the base near the insertion point to find a speed power-up.

Use the tank you freed to blow a hole in the Soviet walls. Tanya can walk right in and use explosives.

receive several of these as reinforcements) and continue northeast on the road running by the soccer field. Keep heading NE until you can go no further, then swing left and attack the Psychic Beacon from the rear, bypassing a huge portion of Soviet defenses and quickly ending the mission.

MISSION 4 LAST CHANCE

Clear out the Grand Cannon with Rocketeers, then make your landing in the field just east of the Soviet shipyard as your Destroyers attack all the Tesla Reactors, V3 Launchers and other forces along the shore near the shipyard. Fight your way to the soccer field and, to the west of it, establish a base. Just to the northeast of your position is an intersection near a bridge. Pump out GIs as quickly as possible and have them advance toward this intersection and garrison the buildings on the corners of it. You can waste time and money building up a tank force, but it's not necessary. With enough GIs you can advance to the bridge and then to the left and deploy them — the longer range of deployed GIs will reach the Psychic Amplifier and soon chop it down. Do keep your eyes open for attacks on your base by Flak Tracks from the west and north, however.

MISSION 5 DARK NIGHT

Disguise the three spies and send them south into the nearby Soviet base to grab a speed power-up. Use Tanya to kill any dogs that might spot the spies, then send one into the base to disable power. Rush Tanya in before the power comes back on and kill as many dogs and troops as possible without going near the Tesla Coils. Send another spy into the base and repeat the process, but this time try also to have Tanya blow up Tesla Coils. Leave one enemy (not a dog!) alive so the third spy can get a disguise. You don't even need spies to blow up the Tesla Coils at the north end of the base because you can shoot the oil barrels, but there's a slight chance Tanya could take a hit.

The rest is simple. Have Tanya shoot the oil barrels at the eastern missile silo base to enter the camp and destroy the walls around the silo so she can blow it up. Head to the west and free the captured troops by shooting — you guessed it — oil barrels. Use the tank to blast down the walls near the silo so Tanya can destroy it.

MISSION 6 LIBERTY

Your top priority is to stop Soviet incursions across the three bridges crossing the Potomac. Luckily you can do this with entrenched GIs; put about ten GIs on the southern side of each bridge and entrench them, and as they gain experience not even tanks can get through. When you're able to start building tanks send them to the northernmost bridge until you've assembled a very large force. Use strategically placed Prisms to protect your base.

Don't attack the Soviet base in the middle of the map because the GIs you've used to create a chokepoint will halt any troops coming from it. Instead build up a huge force of GIs and tanks and cross the northernmost bridge and move eastward across the map toward the NE corner. You might spot the White House as you advance, but don't attack it yet. Wipe out

DID YOU KNOW...
Rob was a radar technician aboard the *HMS Sheffield* during the Falklands War?

Ambush Joe: he has an entry keycard for the building. Take Joe's keycard and swipe it in front of the access panel. You will hear a click.

the northeastern base, then start building up forces at the two bridges close by and attack the orange base simultaneously from the north and south sides.

The Soviet base at the White House has a lot of Flak Tracks, Flak Guns, and Tesla Coils, but several Harrier strikes can weaken the Coils enough that you can smash though with tanks and reclaim the White House. Track down stragglers to finish the battle.

MISSION 7 DEEP SEA

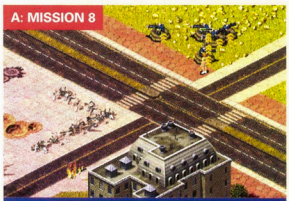
Beat back the initial onslaught by doing three things: send Destroyers to meet enemy ships, crank out Grizzlies and park them along the shore where they can fire on Dreadnoughts, and produce more Destroyers to replace the ones you lose. When things calm down, expect numerous paratroop drops...but don't overreact to them. Enemy troops can't hurt you unless they get inside the base, and you can protect it with numerous entrenched GIs protecting the northern, western, and eastern approaches. A few Prisms at the base helps a lot too.

You can cut down on paratroop drops near the hotels by parking three Aegis Cruisers near the beaches. Destroyers sent to the eastern shore can fend off landings there, and Grizzlies at the northern section of the island can also destroy transports. The only way to achieve victory is to amass a mighty fleet of Destroyers and use them in conjunction with Harriers to eliminate the threat of nukes (expect to get hit a couple of times anyway), then send seven or eight transports loaded with Grizzlies for a landing on the northern perimeter of the enemy base. Make that landing, and it's curtains for the Commies.

MISSION 8 FREE GATEWAY

Head southwest via the bridge that runs diagonally across the map, turning right at the gas station. Entrench your experienced GIs at the SW corner of the base and destroy all the Tesla Coils there; they can fire from out of its range when

A: MISSION 8



Blow up the oil barrels at this corner of the base to take out Tesla Coils and give Tanya a way in.

deployed. Have Tanya blow up the oil barrels near the front of the base, destroy the Tesla Reactors, and take out the Psychic Beacon.

Hide Tanya where she can't get hurt and upgrade your base until you can build Prism tanks. But, before you do that, send some Grizzlies to kill the Desolator units and disrupt Soviet construction. Be ready to fend off attacks until you have a sizable number of Prism tanks (Prisms work nicely), then park them near the Soviet base and watch the fun begin. Gradually move them close until they can target the Tesla Coil, then move in and wipe up the base. Easy.

A: MISSION 6

Tanks will take down the power quickly, letting you advance more forces for the mop-up.

MISSION 9 SUN TEMPLE

First swim south and kill all guards on the shore, then head NW and liberate the freedom fighters and two Grizzlies. Continue moving the tanks and GIs south near the entrance to the base and entrench. Load up the Nighthawk with Engineers and carefully fly them to the western edge of the map, then return and do the same with all the Seals. Load one Engineer into the Nighthawk, fly east, and land on the small outcropping where you killed the guards. Fly the Nighthawk around the base detonating *all* oil barrels.

This is key: sneak an Engineer into the easternmost Mayan Temple to cause a distraction, then use the Seals and Engineers to occupy a War Factory, Construction Yard, and any other buildings you can claim. And to give you time to build tanks and troops, it's *very* important that you call in your tanks to fend off the Soviets as they attack the captured buildings. Crank out units quickly and the battle will soon be over.

A: MISSION 7

Immediately deploy Destroyers to halt the enemy invasion of your base, and use Grizzlies for support.

A: MISSION 7

It'll cost you several Harriers, but an aerial assault and naval bombardment will distract the enemy.

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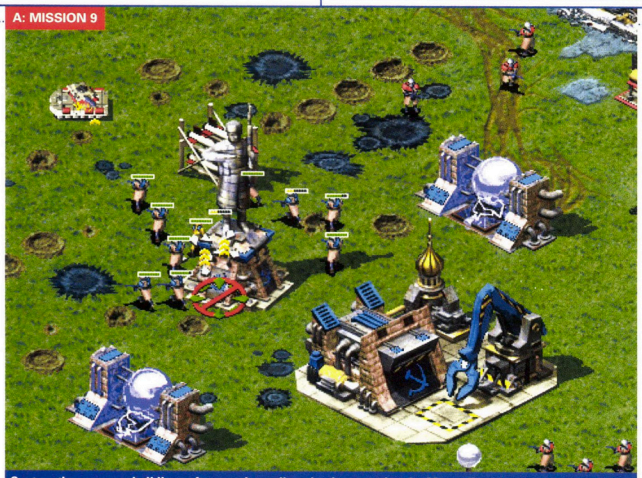
Open the unlocked door and go inside. Joe will follow helplessly. Turn left at the first corner (past the staircase) and you'll find a men's restroom. Go inside the restroom (it's unlocked). Bind Joe and put him in one of the stalls so it looks like he's sitting on a toilet.

A: MISSION 9

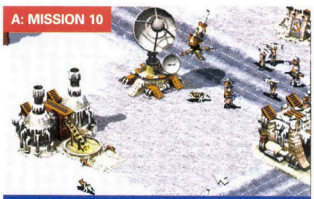


Capture these enemy buildings after causing a diversion by capturing the Mayan Temple.

A: MISSION 10

Worry more about the front of your base than defending Einstein's Lab. Build cheaper units en masse.

A: MISSION 10



Carefully time a spy getting in the base, then move in the Prism tanks.

A: MISSION 11

Double-time some GIs to the Ore Refinery SW of your base and entrench them to protect the Chrono Miner.

MISSION 10 MIRAGE

Start producing GIs and Grizzlies to defend the onslaught at your main base. Send a Grizzly or two to help the Mirages defend Einstein's Lab, then build Prism Towers to aid in base defense. To win quickly and easily, repeat this mantra: *Spies and Prism tanks*. Use Spies to get extra credits (refinery), produce veteran units and vehicles (barracks and war factory), and finally shut down power so your Prism tanks can rip the base apart. Start with the eastern Soviet base and take them down one at a time. The longer range of SEALS can sometimes be used to kill guard dogs to make sneaking Spies into bases easier.

MISSION 11 FALLOUT

You've got to move fast here. Send GIs southwest to protect the refinery and east to garrison the hotel. Build a War Factory and send Grizzlies and GIs NW to protect the other refinery. Quickly put up as many Patriot Missiles as possible to protect your base and Prism Towers near the other refineries. Use a combo of Dolphins, Destroyers, and Grizzlies to fend off Sea Scorpions and Dreadnoughts. When you catch your breath, create a chokepoint at the north bridge with entrenched GIs. Be on the watch for Terror Drones.

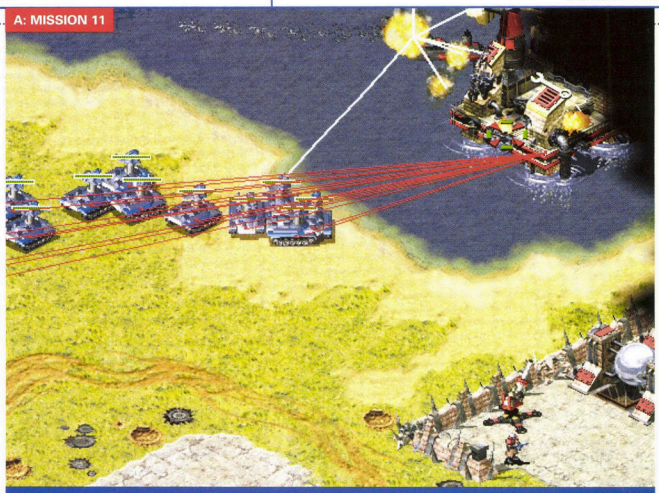
Things slow down when Romanov announces the nuclear strike. Use this time to pump out several Prism Tanks and a few Grizzly Tanks and four or five Transports. Protect the Transports with Destroyers and Dolphins! The Chronosphere can move some but not all of these down to the Soviet base. Land on the NW side of the island, escorted by Destroyers. You might suffer one nuclear strike, but if you move fast you can definitely prevent the second. We clocked in at 30 minutes with this strategy and the par time is 80 minutes.

MISSION 12 CHRONO STORM

Blow up the Tesla Reactor, then shoot a barrel near the prisoners. Send the Engineers into the oil derricks as you begin growing your base. You can capture an airfield to the NE and produce a Paradrop, but be ready to defend it with tanks. Capture as many oil derricks near your main base as possible while producing enough tanks and defensive structures to beat back attacks.

There are several steps you must take to win the day. Build new War

Give Joe a few cigarettes so he'll stay motionless and quiet. Go back outside the restroom and return to the staircase. Go up the stairs. On the second level, you'll see a big metal door with the Imagine Media logo.



Use a large amphibious invasion to transport many Prism tanks to the Soviet base.

MISSION 2 HOSTILE SHORE

Success boils down to how quickly you can build substantial tank and submarine forces. The tanks you begin with are more than enough to defend your base for a while, so focus on stockpiling a good supply of resources before you start building submarines. Build two War Factories and two Shipyards to decrease construction time of units.

Garrison Conscripts in buildings and use your Rhinos to lure American tanks close to the buildings and their destruction. Launch your naval attack when you have eight or more subs, combining it with a ground attack by at least the same number of tanks. If you don't finish this under par time, you need to practice your building skills.

Entrenched GIs can protect captured oil derricks and over time become incredibly strong elite units.

Chrono Legionnaires can chrono buildings *and* units. Just keep them away from Tesla Coils.

MISSION 3 BIG APPLE

Though you can probably take the objective with a dozen or so Rhinos, don't do it — you have to defend the Psychic Beacon from both ground and air units, and only Flak Tracks and Flak Troopers can shoot down Rocketeers. Have Engineers occupy and repair the oil derricks while you put the Yuris near the bridge and control the first American units they see; you can switch control to better units as they approach. Garrison the building located near the oil derrick with Conscripts to safeguard your base. Use two or even three War Factories to build a large force of Rhinos, V3s, and Flak Tracks and begin your advance, using the long range of the V3s to destroy hardened targets like Pillboxes, Barracks, and War Factories. Wipe out as many as possible without slowing the assault down too much. Be ready for Rocketeers and tanks when the Psychic Beacon goes up!

Factories near captured buildings so they won't be destroyed by nuke attacks. Delay a nuke attack and earn extra money by sending spies into buildings — a spy resets the nuclear "clock" to 20 minutes. Make sure you have plenty of IFVs and Patriot Missiles to stop Kirov Airships. Use the Chronosphere to soften up important objectives like the nuke silo and the Kremlin. To eliminate the elite units, create as many Chrono Legionnaires as possible and plop them on the south side of the Kremlin. Destroy the Tesla Coil protecting the Kremlin, and your Legionnaires can Chrono the elite units to oblivion.

SOVIET MISSIONS

MISSION 1 RED DAWN

It doesn't get much easier than this. Advance across the bridges toward the Pentagon, capturing American Barracks so you can build GIs (though the massive reinforcements you receive means you don't need them to win). Use an Engineer to repair the bridge, then gather all reinforcements and head straight for the star-shaped building. When the tank reinforcements drop, it's all over. One mission down, 11 to go.

Capture the American Barracks and crank out GIs.

With all these reinforcements, it's impossible to lose!

Quickly overwhelm the American Destroyers with Typhoons.

Don't occupy the Battle Lab when you have plenty of air defenses.

DID YOU KNOW...
Chiaki was the third person on the *PC Gamer* staff to jump out of an airplane?

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Go through the door and turn to your left. You'll see the receptionist. Ask her for *PC Gamer* Executive Editor Daniel Morris. She'll ask who you are. Tell her you're a PR person representing a computer-game publisher and that you have a pre-scheduled appointment.

MISSION 4 HOME FRONT

Get Flak Guns up immediately and complement them with Flak Troopers to shoot down enemy planes. Tesla Troopers will defend your base well until armored units are created. You might want to produce a Typhoon or two to help guard your lone Shipyard. When the initial attack has died down, build a few Typhoons to destroy the Korean Shipyard, then assemble a large force of Grizzlies, V3 Launchers, and Tesla Troopers and move north-northeast in a counterclockwise motion along the top of the map. You could try Terror Drones, but they're easily destroyed and probably overrated. Position the V3s on a bluff, and rain death on the Koreans as your tanks and troopers move in to take out smaller targets. Be sure to keep your air defenses up to snuff back at your base and you'll be fine.

MISSION 5 CITY OF LIGHTS

Beating the par time on this one can be tough because you must leapfrog from building to building, garrisoning your troops inside and inflicting major damage before moving on. Look for buildings overlooking American positions and oil barrels. The best approach to the tower is along the right side of the map, though you'll have to use some Tesla Troopers to clear the way at points. Crazy Ivans can blow up buildings, but they really aren't all that useful.

Send some troops northwest to garrison the building by the soccer field. Destroying the oil barrels here clears the way for the Tesla Trooper reinforcements you're likely to need to charge the Eiffel Tower. If you've moved carefully, there'll probably be few American troops to finish off once the tower is activated.

MISSION 6 SUB-DIVIDE

Send your meager troops west to guard the ford where enemies can cross to attack your base. Create a few Conscripts and Tesla Troops to guard this invasion route, but your primary concern is churning out Typhoon subs and sending them west to block the emerging naval armada headed for Pearl Harbor. It's imperative you get your Radar up quickly so you can assess the situation. Use the subs to create choke-points at the mouths of harbors, clogging the enemy ships and making them sitting ducks. Keep your Dreadnoughts behind the action where their missiles can strike but they won't take damage; you'll need them later to clear shoreline

Erect three Flak Guns and complement them with Flak Troopers to shoot down incoming planes.

V3s can hang back and destroy large targets while the Grizzlies and Teslas mop up infantry and tanks.

Use troops in garrisoned buildings to target pillboxes and, more importantly, oil barrels.

Blow up oil barrels to create maximum destruction. Just be sure you're in a building when you do it!

You'll have to wait a while for Dan. Blend in by sitting down in the reception area and reading some fine Imagine Media publications. When Dan shows up, shake his hand. Tell him you have a game demo set up in the demo room. He'll say he wasn't expecting you; tell him you have donuts waiting in the demo room.

Use Typhoons and Scorpions to funnel the enemy.

Prism Towers can't touch your subs. Move 'em into the harbor.

Get tanks into the town to the west and shoot houses to find power-ups.

Use everything you've got left to repel the final Allied assault.

batteries and moored enemy vessels at Pearl Harbor. When entry is clear, move in with a massive force of Typhoons and pick off the ships one by one.

MISSION 7 CHRONO DEFENSE

Quickly erect Sentry Guns at the NW and SE entrance as you build an Ore Refinery and produce Conscripts and Tesla Troopers. At the first opportunity throw up at least two Flak Guns, and, when Radar is erected, focus on Flak Troopers. The enemy hits hard and fast, but you've usually got enough time to regroup between assaults. The key is to send a few tanks, Flak Troopers, and Engineers out on a scavenger run for crates. Blow up houses in the town to the east, move to the SE corner and blow up tents, then move north from there and use Engineers to capture the Tech Drills. The Flak Troopers protect you from Rocketeers sent to guard the Tech Drills. You should, of course, be building Grizzlies, Flak Tracks, and Conscripts — *plenty* of Conscripts — to beat back the numerous assaults. Hang on — the enemy only attacks three or four times and then you win.

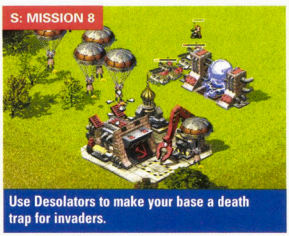
MISSION 8 DESECRATION

Set up your base and move all troops except Desolators toward the Lincoln Memorial to the north. Use the Desolators to create a "death ground" around your base, and construct buildings like Barracks and War Factories on the perimeter of it and set rally points so the units don't walk on the deadly ground. (You might have to adjust the location of the Desolators a bit...) Get a *bunch* of War Miners in the field; you'll need plenty of resources to win.

Use tanks to blow a hole in the bridge east of your base, channeling all incoming attacks to a single point you can defend easily by making it the rally point for units. Destroy or severely weaken the purple Soviet Base directly to the east first, protecting your War Miners when possible. V3 Launchers and Apocalypse Tanks are a perfect mix for reducing any base to rubble. The V3 can fire on the other Soviet base from your side of the broken bridge provided you move a few tanks close enough so the big rockets can target. Mission complete.

MISSION 9 THE FOX AND THE HOUSE

Use the IFV you control to destroy the nearby enemy IFV. If it survives, control the GIs at the base to the northeast of your start point and finish it. Control the two Engineers at that base and capture the Battle Lab and Barracks to create three Spies (one extra just in case). Send the Yuris skirting counterclockwise along the top of the map to find the base with the Sniper; control him and he kills the entrenched GIs. Control the tank and blow an exit for the Sniper at the northern side of the base. Return the way you came, disguise the Spies, and let the Sniper shoot most of the guards from outside Prism Tower range. Now send in one Spy to shut down power so the Sniper can kill the bodyguards and any remaining SEALs inside the compound. Finally, send in one more Spy; as soon as power goes down rush in a Yuri and control the President. It's over in less than 10 minutes.



Use Desolators to make your base a death trap for invaders.

Control this Sniper so he'll kill all the GIs guarding the encampment.

Guard important installations with Flak Troopers and Flak Cannons, and possibly Flak Tracks.

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He'll agree to see the game and will leave to get his PalmPilot. You must now find the key to the locked demo room. Go down the hallway behind the receptionist. Turn right into the second cubicle.

Capture enemy buildings and quickly erect Tesla Coils.

Use Flak Tracks and Flak Cannons to halt the enemy's airships.

V3 Launchers work well in a coastal-defense role.

Send Yuris ahead of tanks to convert enemy vehicles to your side.

MISSION 10 WEATHERED ALLIANCE

Have the tanks guard the radar and Tesla Reactor as you pump out about ten Flak Troopers and five Tesla Troopers. Also build several Flak Cannons, because Rocketeers will harass you constantly. Manually send your War Miners eastward to the richer crystal deposits until the gems are depleted. Don't lose those two transports — you have very limited resources and will need them.

Your fleet should consist of a balanced force of Dreadnoughts, Sea Scorpions, Submarines, and Giant Squids. Head east and park the Dreadnoughts offshore and shell Prism Towers and other vital Allied buildings while subs and squids are in Guard mode to protect against Navy SEALs and Dolphins. The landing force should consist of Rhino and Apocalypse Tanks backed up by V3 Launchers to shell Prism Towers. Do not capture the Weather Control Device until you have a nuclear strike ready to go.

MISSION 11 RED REVOLUTION

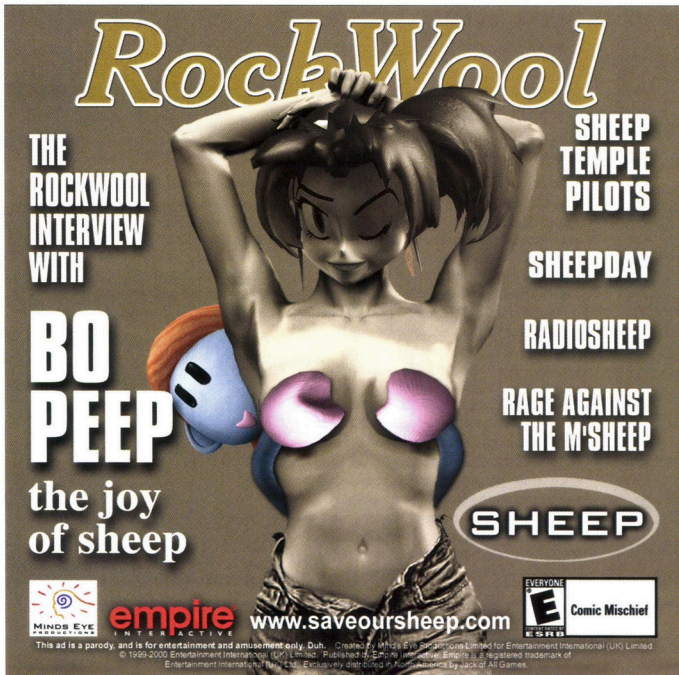
Order your Conscripts to garrison every building in sight (build more troops if necessary) while your tanks destroy the Tesla Coil directly north of your base. Capture the two Tesla Reactors and build your own Tesla Coils. Put a couple on the east and west sides of the plateau, and they'll zap troops heading to your base. Capture *every* possible building, particularly northeast of your base, and build Tesla Coils around each one (build several around the building closest to the base walls). This shuts down every avenue the endless supplies of Yuris can take…and if you don't stop the Yuris you can't win. There's also an airfield on the eastern side of the map; capture it by clearing a path with Terror Drones followed by Engineers. Use the Kirov Airships to guard the east and west approaches to your base.

With the Yuri flood almost totally stemmed, just protect your War Miners with tanks as you build a nuclear silo. It takes three nuke hits on Medium difficulty to destroy the Kremlin. Be warned: Yuri sends streams of Kirov Airships to stop the launch, so have plenty of anti-air defenses ready before the silo's completed.

MISSION 12 POLAR STORM

Create about 10 Flak Troopers and six Tesla Troopers as you place four Sentry Guns just north of the barracks in anticipation of the IFVs that will Chrono in and attack. You'll need the Flak Troopers to shoot down Rocketeers; use the Tesla Troopers to fight off tanks with the help of quickly erected Tesla Coils. If you can survive the first few attack waves, you'll be OK. Build several Flak Cannons to guard against Harrier attacks as you build a War Factory and several War Miners. You'll also need two or three V3 Launchers to destroy enemy ships. Don't waste time with Rhino tanks; wait until you have the Battle Lab up and create only Apocalypse tanks. Build a Service Depot so you can take an MCV along for the invasion.

Use Dreadnoughts backed by Squids, Sea Scorpions, and Typhoons to clear a landing zone, then send several landing vehicles full of Apocalypse tanks and an MCV to the beachhead. Build a new base here protected by Tesla Coils and Flak Cannons and begin the winding advance northward, using Yuris to negate enemy tanks and troops and the Iron Curtain to protect tanks as they hit Prism Towers. Nuclear strikes can soften up hard targets. Remember to force-target any enemy Mirage tanks. Capture the airfield to the north to earn three Kirov airships, and start heading west toward the Chronosphere. It'll take time, but victory will be yours.



The Facilities Coordinator will ask what you need. Tell her you need the demo room key and she will get it from a drawer. Take the demo room key back out into the reception area and look around for a closed door with a *DailyRadar* bumper sticker on it.

CRIMSON SKIES

Having trouble in *Crimson Skies*? Never fear — even Nathan Zachary needed some advice now and then. *PC Gamer* has managed to unearth this rare artifact: a love note from the Black Swan to Zachary himself!

Master the art of barrel rolling to avoid enemy fire when you're on an opponent's six.

Dear Nathan,

I realize in this crazy world that the hopes and dreams of a couple of air pirates don't amount to a hill of beans, but I need to know, are we even going to try to love each other? That bruising you took in the Kingdom of Hawaii has me concerned that you aren't as careful as you should be. Is it because of our recent rendezvous in Sky Haven when you couldn't get "lift off"? I told you not to worry about that. Sparks may be able to repair your bullet-riddled Devastators, but he won't be able to repair my heart should you start pushing up the daisies.

So I think it's best that we don't see each other again until you can get your head back in the clouds. Maybe you won't listen to some advice from a simple dame like me, but if you don't do it for me, at least do it for those lovable lugs, the Fortune Hunters. Until then, safe flying, my darling, and please do your best to swallow your pride and heed my suggestions on the long journey ahead.

ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES

Your last plane was pretty beat up, Nathan. You need to get out from under enemy fire as quickly as possible. If you've got an enemy in your crosshairs, and his wingman is on your six, try barrel rolling to make yourself a harder target while still giving the other palooka his licks. To barrel roll, simply tip either wing toward the ground slightly, then pull back gently on the stick while rolling the plane in the opposite direction. Tap the rudder slightly to keep your crosshairs on your man and keep the lead flying! Of course, if you're getting beat up, don't hesitate to stomp on the throttle and pull out of there in a hurry!

WAG THAT TAIL

You know, Nate, with that rally race from Peking to Paris in '07, those race-car drivers have been teaching us fly boys a thing or two. But they're not the only ones who know the benefits of sliding. When you're engaged in a dogfight, and you need to make sharper turns than your opponent, try "tail sliding" in your plane.

First, make sure you already have enough speed so that you don't stall. Then completely throttle down (the default is 1 on the keyboard). Wait until your speedometer reads less than half

Gun those engines into a turn and you should smoke around a corner.

Head for the clouds when you're outnumbered, then attack from above.

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Unlock the door with the key. Leave the door open and go back to the reception area. Wait for Dan to return with his PalmPilot. When he comes back, begin walking to the demo room. Dan will follow.

Head for the clouds when you're outnumbered, then attack from above.

of your plane's maximum speed. Roll into the direction you want to turn and then pull back hard on the stick as you jam on the throttle (or hit 9). This should cause your tail to slide behind the nose of your plane and the turn should be much sharper. But be careful, sweetheart: don't try this with a man on your six, or your next date will be with terra firma!

A HARD MAN IS GOOD TO FIND

We girls know, Zachary, that charming the ladies is like picking the right ammo for a dogfight — never go too soft too soon. The armor-piercing or "hard" rounds in your guns should be your main weapons of choice. Pepper your enemies with AP ammo until they're stripped of their armor and softened up, usually trailing black smoke as they go. Then switch to dum-dum or "soft" rounds to finish off your victim by ripping up his innards. But keep in mind that AP rounds are heavier and thus need a much greater lead in your sights. DD rounds, however, are usually quicker and have a higher rate of fire.

The same principle applies to rockets. When making that initial pass at the beginning of a dogfight, it's a good idea to show your hospitality with armor-piercing rockets. Then, as those ugly mugs begin to trail smoke, switch to high-explosive or boomer rockets to give them a warm shower of shrapnel. One piece of advice, sugar: avoid those flak and seeker rockets. The flak rockets travel so gosh-darn slowly and pack such a weak punch that they're useless in a dogfight, and the seeker rockets are only useful if you can nail a fella with a beeper rocket to act as a homing device. Well, shoot, if you only have a few chances to bullseye someone, why waste it with a beeper? APs and boomers are all the rockets a hunk like you needs.

COVER YOUR FANNY

I know you can hold your own against anyone in the world, Nathan, but even the best can't handle four foes at once. Whenever you're outgunned by more than two-to-one, don't dare get into a tight fight full of switchbacks and S-curves. It's just a matter of time before one of those monkeys gets on your tail and starts filling you full of hot lead.

Instead, trying running and gunning. Keep your finger steady on the throttle as you climb high into the clouds and then descend like a demon, getting quick shots and maybe a rocket or two on your foes. If you're in the clear, ease up on the throttle so you can keep a pigeon in your sights, but don't dally too long on the dance floor before hitting the gas and climbing again. It can take a while to finish off some of those rats, but any woman will tell you that slow and steady wins the race, handsome.

TIPS FROM THE POWDER ROOM

You know we broads do a lot more than powder our nose in the ladies room. I've managed to overhear some jazzy tidbits from some of the other gals, so and I thought I'd pass them along.

CHEATER'S CORNER

NO ONE LIVES FOREVER

(all cheats are case-sensitive)
Hit your talk button, then enter any of the codes below:

- **mpwegotdeathstar Gives you full ammo**
- **mpwonderbra Gives you Full Armor**
- **mpdrdentz Gives you Full Health**
- **mprosebud Spawns the Snowmobile**

RUNE

Bring up the console with the ~ key or the engine command line with the Tab key and type:

- **CHEATPLEASE Enables cheat mode**
- **GOD God mode**
- **GHOST No clipping**
- **FLY Fly mode**
- **WALK Ghost/Fly mode off**
- **BEHINDVIEW 0 First-person view**
- **PLAYERSONLY Pauses all non-player characters**
- **KILLPAWNS Kill all enemies**
- **TOGGLEFULLSCREEN Turns full-screen mode on/off**
- **PREFERENCES Advanced options**

SUMMON ITEMS

- **VikingShortSword**
- **VikingBroadSword**
- **VikingShield**
- **VikingShieldCross**
- **GoblinAxe**
- **GoblinShield**
- **DwarfBattleSword**
- **DwarfBattleAxe**
- **DwarfBattleHammer**
- **DwarfWorkSword**
- **DwarfWorkHammer**
- **DwarfBattleShield**
- **RuneOfPower**
- **RuneOfPowerRefill**
- **RuneOfHealth**
- **RuneOfStrength**
- **MagicShield**
- **DarkShield**
- **RustyMace**
- **RomanSword**
- **SigurdAxe**
- **HandAxe**
- **Torch**

DID YOU KNOW...
Li has met all the requirements to join the Los Angeles Police Department?

Go into the demo room and stand against the back wall where the computers are. Wait until Dan is inside the room, then close the door again so no one outside can see in.

Take out a Zep's belly guns first, then concentrate on the engines.

- In the Kingdom of Hawaii, there's supposedly a British submarine that can launch planes. It has huge anti-air guns that'll tear a fella to shreds if he flies straight at it. Instead, creep up behind and blast those Limeys as they're taking off.
- In the Northwest, there's a plump Zep by the name of Worker's Voyage. Word in the air is that its engines can be taken out in a jiffy with .40-caliber guns firing dum-dum ammo. Just take out the wimpy turrets on its back and belly first, and you'll have no trouble slowing her down.
- In Hollywood, there's a lot of fun to be had. I know a couple of real crazy palookas who like to fly through a gap in the Egyptian exhibit. What they don't know is that the top part of the gap can be blown away with guns or a rocket, making that trick a snap to pull off for the sneaky!
- In Colorado, if you ever get in a scrape with the Black Hat gang, remember to stay close to the Pandora. Its turrets and cannons will give you some helpful fire support when you're outnumbered.
- In Manhattan, there are a lot of buildings that'll make a pancake out of a careless pilot. But when you're outgunned, head into the buildings to shake an enemy. While a Hoplite is ideal for tight flying, its puny punch makes it penny dreadful. Consider flying a Fury or a Peacemaker into battle: it's not as good on the turns, but it can blacken anyone's eye!

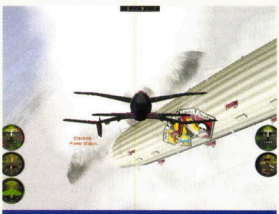
LOVE ME TENDER

I know you aren't looking for advice on how to get out of scraps from me, Nathan. But in all the gin joints, in all the towns, in all the world, I hope you'll live long enough to walk back into mine.

XOXO

— Black Swan

Make life easier by shooting the top of the Egyptian Exhibit.



Choose maneuverability over firepower in Manhattan.

CHEATER'S CORNER

RUNE: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 65

MAP NAMES (use with OPEN and SWITCHCOOPLEVEL commands):

intro (intro movie)
ragnarvillage (begin movie)
ragnarvillage2
sailingship (level transition)
sinkingship
sinkingship2
deepunder1odin
deepunder1odinbv
deepunder3
deepunder4
hel1
hel1a
hel1a2
hel1b
hell2end
hel3a
hel3b
hellift
goblin1
goblin2
trialpit
beetlefly (level transition)
thorapproach
thor1
thormap3
thormap4a
thormap4b
thormap5a
thormap5b
thormap6loki
mountain1
mountain2
dwarftrans
dwarf1wwheel
dwarfmap2
dwarfmap3a
dwarfmap3b
dwarfmap5a
dwarfmap5b
dwarfmap6darkdwarf
loki1
loki1a
lokimaze
loki2
loki3a
loki3b
villageruin
asgard (end movie)

STAR TREK VOYAGER: ELITE FORCE

Hit ~ to open the console and type sv_cheats 0 to enable the cheats. Then enter any of the following codes:

god Invincibility
give all Get all weapons.
give ammo Full ammo
give health Full health
kill Suicide
notarget Makes you invisible to AI
map [name] Skip levels
noclip Walk through objects

DID YOU KNOW...
Chuck was once a semi-professional ventriloquist and impressionist?

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When you're online, you know how frustrating it is to get disconne

DISCONNECTED AGAIN. ENOUGH ALREADY.

There you are happily gaming online when you hear

that one little word you know so well, "Good-bye." Suddenly, you're no longer firing a laser-guided rocket at the back of your buddy's head. Instead, you're left all alone with nothing but your thoughts to keep you company. And one thought in particular keeps popping up.

WHO DISCONNECTED ME AND WHERE DO THEY LIVE?

How are you going to get back at your Internet service provider for ending your session just when you were starting to have fun? A million interesting ideas run through your head but you won't settle for anything less than the "pièce de resistance." Ahhh...you've got it. It's time to take action. It's time to make a call.

HELLO, EARTHLINK.

If you're tired of your ISP disconnecting you, why not return the favor and call EarthLink? You'll find we have what you've been looking for in an Internet service provider all along. Like over 5000 local access numbers in the United States to help you get connected. And a Fast Lane Internet monitor that automatically alerts us if you're having a problem with your connection. So pick up the phone, call your ISP and in a polite but soulless voice say, "Good-bye." Then call us at 1-800-EARTHLINK or visit us at earthlink.net. Because it's *your* Internet.

EarthLink™

EarthLink™ An Internet Partnership Sprint

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #112

Pull out your I-Mod and disrupt Dan's frequency — it's the only way to stop him.
Once he's finished thrashing and crying like a little girl, kick his twitching form beneath the table and arrange the chairs so that he can't be seen.

RUNE

With zombies, dwarves, and goblins galore, this new action/adventure game has a lot of enemies for a young barbarian to cut his teeth on. Take our advice, and you'll make it through with your head intact.

The game consists of five chapters, each presenting slightly different tasks and challenges. A detailed walkthrough would be impossible in a couple of pages, so we've provided you with some strategies on how to get past the majority of perils and puzzles. You'll need a sharp eye as well as the sharp blade to find all the levers and doors, so don't be too hasty on your trip to Valhalla.

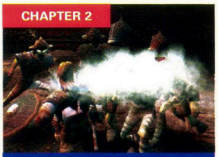
Start slashing just before the tubestrikers attack.

CHAPTER 1 THE VILLAGE AND UNDERWORLD

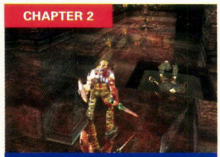
- Proceed immediately to the long hall and face your first battle. From there, move to the docks and watch the opening cinematic. Once the prologue ends, swim down to the sunken boats beneath you. Look out for air pockets to replenish your oxygen.
- Always pay attention to Ragnar's head because he often notices things that you may not. In the tower inside the underwater cavern, Ragnar notices a crack in the wall. Use your mace to smash the wall and fill the tower with water.
- Once past the first tower, you'll face your first real opponents. The baby Giant Crabs are easily put down, but the tubestrikers can be tricky. Avoiding them is the simplest solution, but killing them requires precise timing. A tubestriker sticks its nose out of the tube just before it strikes. Begin your slash just as you see its nose appear and it'll dart into your swing.
- To avoid falling off cliff edges, walk while crouching for precise movement.
- Keep an eye out for glow plants: they often point in the direction of an exit.

CHAPTER 2 HEL

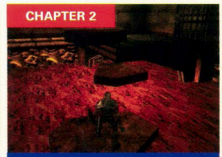
- Zombies can be truly killed only by decapitating them. The Roman Sword is the most effective means as long as you're swinging at shoulder level, or you can simply throw axes at them. Setting zombies on fire with a torch is also lethal, but takes a little longer.
- Cross the lava in the main room by knocking down the pillars with a weapon.
- In the room with the reflective floor, you need to depress two pressure pads to open the exit. Use zombie bodies to weigh down the pads.
- There is one room with two chambers, the second of which has large, flat pieces of debris. Climb up to the ledge in the first chamber and look for cracks in the wall. Behind the cracks is a switch that causes the room to fill with lava. After pulling the switch, quickly jump down onto the flat pieces and float on them while the room fills with lava. Then



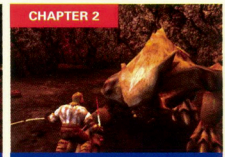
To decapitate zombies, swing your sword at shoulder level.



Use the bodies of fallen foes on the pressure plates in this room.



Get to these large slabs of debris before the room fills with lava.



Look for a nearby berserker rune to get by this Torfar.

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Go back outside, but be sure to turn off the lights in the demo room and close and lock the door behind you. Hide your I-Mod under your clothes.
Go back to the Facilities Coordinator and return the key to her. (If you don't, she'll come looking for it at the demo room and you'll be given away.)

simply jump to the nearby ledge and continue on.

- To defeat Torfar Kolla, look for debris lying on the ground. Pick up any weapon you can find and look for a crawl space on a nearby wall. Crawl inside to find a berserker rune. Use it to kill the Kolla.

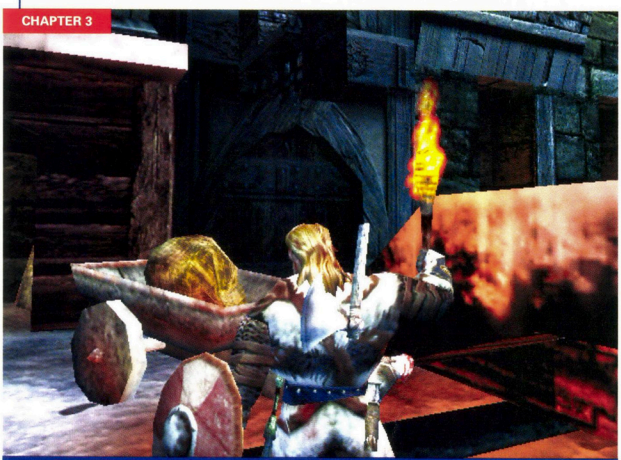
CHAPTER 3 THORSTADT

- There is a keep early in this level. Break down the door and climb to the top for some refreshing mead.
- Enter Loki's Temple through a side door only after you have visited the main doors. Also, there are some Vikings camping nearby. One of them has an enormous axe for the taking...from his cold, dead fingers.
- There is a courtyard with a bridge over a frozen river. Break the ice to find some weapons and a rune stone. Use the cart next to the bridge to jump to the center opening above the door.
- Don't hesitate to use your shield against the Vikings, since you can take theirs once they're dead.
- Use your rune power only when several enemies are nearby, as the power often wears off between encounters.
- This is the first level where you need to start throwing weapons to clear debris, destroy walls or cut ropes. Enemies standing underneath crates or chandeliers are easy victims.
- When fighting snowbeasts or goblins in the mountains, lure them into the steam geysers for painful burns. And bear in mind that monsters will often fight each other, so it's wise to lure many enemies close to each other.

CHAPTER 4 THE DWARVES

- There are a lot of concealed entrances here. Look for doorways between trees and under water. Also, some switches are found inside barrels. Just do what any self-respecting barbarian would do: smash everything.
- Dwarves can be pesky, but are easily killed with a long-range melee weapon like a sword or battle axe and constant circle strafing. Avoid the jumping attacks that worked well against zombies or Vikings as it simply misses the Dwarves.
- To get by the dam, use the gong to call out the Dwarves. Then, hit the pump trigger to open the door and then hop back into the water. Repeat the process with the next dam.
- Release the goblin slaves to cause some confusion and make killing the Dwarves easier amid the commotion.
- Stay on the move against spiderbots by using powerful weapons and ignoring your shield.
- There is a tower in the middle of the aqueduct channel. Inside is a torch that makes searching the dark catacombs much easier. Remember that torches can be relit once they go out by walking up to another fire source and hitting the "use" key.
- To destroy the first electrical generator, hit the column near it, causing it to crash into the generator. Repeat this trick for the second generator to electrify the water around it, killing the nearby Dwarves.
- As in most *Rune* levels, you can dispatch enemies by luring them to their deaths. Dwarves in particular can be drawn to electricity or a watery grave.

CHAPTER 3



Use this cart to make your way to the entrance above.

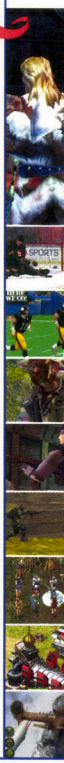
CHAPTER 5

Use rune power sparingly: it can be devastating against large groups.

CHAPTER 5 LOKI

- After you have ridden through the cable car, you will walk through a canyon until you come to two towers. Go to the left of the first tower to find the entrance. Cross the gap on the narrow bridge to tower two, then kill the catapult guards.
- Use your rune power sparingly and only against several enemies. In the small room with a coffin inside, smash the lid to reveal an important pressure plate.
- There are four switches in the long corridor with the grates. Look beneath you to see the zombies wandering around. Use the switches to open trap doors and lead them to their deaths.
- Kill the zombies as quickly as you can before they can get to the goo and make your life more difficult.
- When Ragnar becomes a sark, pools of goo now replenish his health.
- The exit to the village is in the far left corner underneath some debris. Past that is a bridge with a nearby cave where you can heal Ragnar. Also, avoid using your rune power unless it is absolutely necessary.
- The Trickster's Maze is not easy, but the simplest way through is to watch for the doorways that are partially lit.
- Finally, kill Sark Conrack by using whatever rune magic you have left along with your most powerful weapons. Ignore the shield, if you still use it.

After that, enjoy your well-deserved trip to the cushy halls of Valhalla.



Now it's time to get the Previews/Disc Editor. From the reception area, follow the hallway behind the receptionist until you see the sign that says DailyRadar. Look into each cubicle until you find one that's empty. Use the extension directory on the wall to find the extension for Jeremy Williams.

NHL 2001

Grab your Bauers and your twig, because it's time to munch the biscuit! And for you rookies, here's a mini-camp to get you on the team.

TAPING THE STICK

The last thing an NHL player does before he hits the ice is wrap his stick blade with some hockey tape: it gives him some extra control on the pocket and provides a target for a teammate's tape-to-tape pass. On the computer, however, control comes from wisely assigning the buttons on your gamepad. What those buttons should do depends on the kind of game you want to play.

■ ARCADE

For fast, arcade-style play with lots of shots, hits, and saves, you need to assign certain functions to your gamepad. You'll need "spin left" and "spin right" for those Denis Savard–style spin-o-ramas, while the "last man back" option is your safety valve for when you get caught pinching in.

■ SIMULATION

If you prefer slow, deliberate hockey, dump the spin functions: they're worthless. Instead, assign "dump shot" for those deep, slow tosses into the corner. Also, make sure line changes and coaching options are on the pad as well.

TAKING THE ICE

Whether you want to play in arcade or simulation mode, a few general strategies will help you fill your opponent's net with rubber. One-timers — and the rebounds that come from them — are the best way to score. Your offensive strategy, then, should involve lots of passes through the slot with plenty of one-timers.

Arcade mode takes quick thumbs; simulation requires strategy.

■ SNIPERS

If you're on a team with a sniper who plays wing — such as Dallas (Hull), Washington (Bondra), or Florida (Bure) — use the coaching options to adjust the lines so your sniper swaps places with his center. Then switch your offensive strategy to "positional," which will force your forwards to stick to a lane. With your center now on the wing, your sniper will have a better chance on the one-timer in front of the goalie. You'll lose more face-offs this way, but it's a trade-off you can live with.

■ PLUMBERS

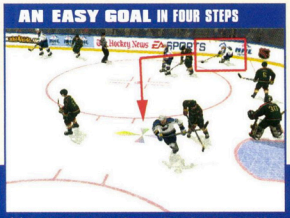
If you're playing a team with no great shooters but lots of hardworking forwards (St. Louis, Buffalo, New Jersey, etc.), keep the centers where they are and switch your offensive strategy to the "triangle" with high pressure. Then take advantage of the fact that the goalies in *NHL 2001* often drastically overplay the one-timer.

To do that, have a man cycle with the puck in the corner. As he gets near the mid-boards, have him pass the puck to the forward on the other side of goal. But *don't* one-time the shot. Often the goalie will overplay the puck and dive to make the save on the one-timer that isn't coming. Now that the goalie is out of position, your man should be able to wrist the puck quickly into the net.

STRATEGIES

- Avoid the "funnel," "behind-the-net," and "crash-the-net" offensive strategies. While certainly sound philosophies in the real game, there isn't enough room or control for such a close-to-the-cage game in *NHL 2001*. In your zone, the "collapsing high" defense is excellent for keeping the shots from the outside. Plus, with a man patrolling the slot, he'll be able to scoop up the rebounds, which is how many of the goals are scored.
- On special teams, the "umbrella" is by far the best powerplay tactic: it spreads the defensemen and allows for long cross-ice passes, which the goalies tend to overplay. On the PK, pick the "combination" for the best all-around defense.
- Finally, the breakaway is still much harder to score with in this game than in real hockey. The best tactic is to lineup the attacking man with the post opposite his shooting hand as he's skating toward the net. Then, just before he would collides with the goalie, turn hard to the forehand and shoot.

AN EASY GOAL IN FOUR STEPS



(1) In the triangle, a forward cycles to the mid-boards, looking for a cross-ice pass to the slot.

(2) Once he's there, fire a pass to the slot, but *don't* one-time it.

(3) Notice how the goalie overplays the pass. Hold on to the puck for a step, then wrist it into the net.

(4) With the goalie out of position, low to the glove is an easy goal.

DID YOU KNOW...
Corey worked at a sewage treatment plant for two days?

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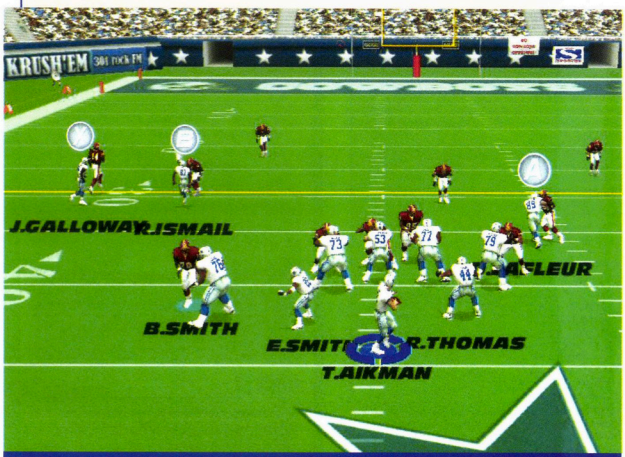
Pick up the phone on the desk and dial Jeremy's extension. (Remember: Imagine Media extensions now begin with a 2.) Jeremy will pick up on the other end. Tell him he has a delivery from FedEx, and that he has to come pick it up at the mailroom.

MADDEN NFL 2001

Football is a complicated game, and unless you understand some of the basic play-calling strategies, your chances of success are small. Here are some basic tips to help beginners make their way to the Super Bowl.



Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of everybody on the field is as important as mastering the controls.

SET UP YOUR PLAYBOOK

Whether you decide to use one of the existing NFL teams or draft up one of your own, you'll want to create a custom playbook. The benefit of this is that you can more easily find the exact play you want to call without wading through the entire playbook. It also allows you to choose easily from multiple plays using the same formation and player package. The screen below gives you an example: here are three running plays to the right, using the single back formation, with the big (two tight end) player package. However you choose to set up your playbook, you're sure to learn how to navigate it more quickly and efficiently than if you were to use a standard team set of plays.

HOT ROUTES AND AUDIBLES

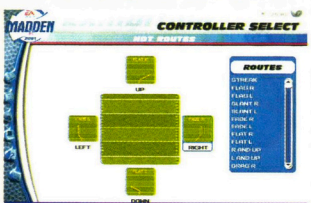
Setting up and knowing exactly what your Hot Routes and Audibles are going to do is very important. After all, it's useless to change the play if you have no idea how your players are going to react on the field!

Once you have your playbook in order, you should customize these two areas. When calling an Audible, you're actually changing the play at the line of scrimmage (changing from a running play to a passing play, for instance). Hot Routes are used when you see a weakness in the defense and know you can exploit it by sending one of your receivers on a different pattern. This screen lets you pick four different routes for the chosen receiver to run. One of the best uses of the Hot Route is when you see one (or more!) of your opponent's defensive backs closing in on the line of scrimmage. With a quick Hot Route call, you can have your wide receiver, who was originally going to run an in pattern, break off on a post pattern — blowing past those blitzing cornerbacks and safeties!

KNOW YOUR PERSONNEL

This may sound obvious, but it's vital that you pay attention to your players. If one side of your offensive line is much better than the other, it makes sense to have a playbook that favors that side when it comes to your running game. Always know where your best receiver is at all times. He may not be the first option on every play, but if things break down it's nice to know where he'll be in case you need to get rid of the ball in a hurry. On defense, you'll need to assess your talent up front to decide whether to run a 4-3 or a 3-4 defense. If you have an outstanding set of linebackers and only a so-so defensive line, 3-4 is the way to go. This thinking also applies to your secondary. If you have so-so-secondary but great linebackers, it's not always a certainty that you should call a nickel defense on passing downs: that fourth linebacker in the 3-4 may be a better defender than moving in a marginal defensive back to replace him by going with a nickel package.

Building a playbook of your own will help you quickly find the play you want to call.



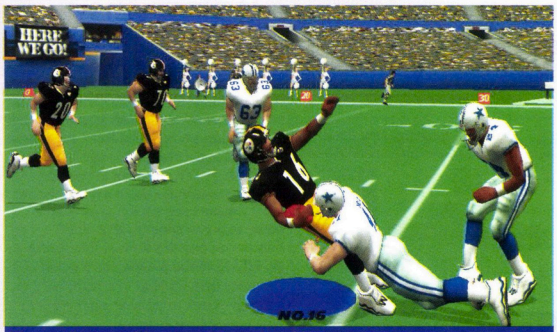
Running plays on the fly can be confusing without preset Hot Routes.

After Jeremy agrees, hang up and go back out to the reception area. Find the mailroom (it's behind a large shelf of mail cubbies) and wait there.

CODE CORNER

Having trouble unlocking all the classic teams? Not anymore. Just go to the Settings menu, click on Secret Codes, and put in as many of these codes as you like:

1957 49ers team	GOLDRUSH
1957 Lions team	LIONPOWER
1958 Colts team	STABLES
1958 Giants team	JOLLYGREEN
1960 Eagles team	GREENWINGS
1962 Oilers team	THEREWASAMAN
1962 Texans team	GETEM
1966 Chiefs team	MEGIVEYOU
1966 Cowboys team	WHOSHOTJR
1966 Packers team	CHAMPS
1967 Cowboys team	TUNDRA
1967 Packers team	SNOWPLOW
1967 Rams team	BLITZER
1968 Colts team	SHOCKER
1968 Jets team	TVTIMEOUT
1968 Raiders team	HEIDI
1969 Chiefs team	NOFLUKE
1969 Vikings team	AIIFLUKE
1970 Browns team	MNF
1970 Jets team	DAMNYANKEES
1970 Vikings team	PEOPLEEATER
1971 Chiefs team	OVERTIME
1971 Cowboys team	STARS
1971 Dolphins team	LONGESTGAME
1972 Colts team	AIRSHOW
1972 Dolphins team	PERFECT
1972 Jets team	AIRTIME
1972 Raiders team	SOUR
1972 Steelers team	LUCKY
1973 Bengals team	JUNGLECATS
1974 Dolphins team	DEFENDERS
1974 Raiders team	STRUGGLE
1974 Steelers team	STEELCURTAIN
1974 Vikings team	TARK
1975 Cowboys team	HAILMARY
1975 Steelers team	MIRACLELEAP
1975 Vikings team	PURPLE
1977 Colts team	GHOSTTOTHEPOST
1977 Raiders team	THEGHOST
1977 Cowboys team	USATEAM
1978 Chargers team	ROLLER
1978 Dolphins team	CANNEDTUNA
1978 Oilers team	EARL
1978 Raiders team	HOLY
1978 Steelers team	DYNASTY
1979 Bucaneers team	PIRATES
1979 Cowboys team	COMEBACK
1981 49ers team	THECATCH
1981 Bengals team	TIGERS
1981 Chargers team	IRONMAN
1981 Cowboys team	NOCHANCE
1983 Raiders team	HOMESICK
1984 Dolphins team	DANTHEMAN
1985 Bears team	UPSET
1985 Falcons team	FLYAWAY
1985 Patriots team	BLOWOUT
1986 Broncos team	THEDRIVE
1988 Bengals team	NOHOPE
1989 Broncos team	CRUSHED
1990 Bills team	WIDERIGHT
1990 Raiders team	ONEEYE
1991 Falcons team	NEONLIGHTS
1991 Lions team	TOOMUCH
1992 Bills team	COMEBACKKID
1992 Cowboys team	HOWBOUTEM
1993 Bills team	NOTAGAIN
1994 49ers team	BYTHEBAY
1994 Broncos team	OUCH
1994 Chargers team	CHARGE
1996 Packers team	ALMOST
1996 Panthers team	DEFENSE
1998 49ers team	THECATCHTWO
1998 Packers team	NOLUCK
1998 Vikings team	MISSEDCHANCE
1999 Rams team	NOWHEREMAN
1999 Titans team	MIRACLEPLAY
EA Sports team	INTHEGAME
Mummies team	KINGTUT
Millennium Team	MADDENMEN
1984 All-Madden team	MADDEN84
1985 All-Madden team	MAD1985
1986 All-Madden team	86MADDEN
1987 All-Madden team	1987MAD
1988 All-Madden team	MADDEN88
1989 All-Madden team	MAD1989
1990 All-Madden team	90MADDEN
1991 All-Madden team	1991MAD
1992 All-Madden team	MADDEN92
1993 All-Madden team	MAD1993
1994 All-Madden team	94MADDEN
1995 All-Madden team	1995MAD
1996 All-Madden team	MADDEN96
1997 All Madden team	MAD1997
1998 All-Madden team	98MADDEN
1999 All-Madden team	1999MAD
All Bears team	BROWNBEAR
All Bills team	BLUEBILLS
All Broncos team	BUCKINGBRONCO
All Chargers team	BLUECHARGERS
All Chiefs team	REDCHIEFS
All Colts team	WHITECOLTS
All Cowboys team	BLUECOWBOYS
All Dolphins team	AQUAFINS
All Eagles team	GREENEAGLES
All Falcons team	BLACKFALCONS
All 49ers team	GOLDNINERS
All Giants team	BIGGIANTS
All Jets team	GREENJETS
All Lions team	SILVERLIONS
All Packers team	YELLOWPACK
All Panthers team	BIGCATS
All Patriots team	REDPATS
All Raiders team	SILVERRAID
All Rams team	GOLDRAMS
All Ravens	DARKBIRD
All Redskins team	REDINDIANS
All Saints team	MARCHINGIN
All Steelers team	BLACKSTEEL
All Vikings team	CONQUER



Want to relive some of those great '70s match-ups? It's easy when you know the right codes.

CHEATER'S CORNER

QUAKE III: ARENA

Press ~ to access the console and type in the desired cheat:

- /give all Gives you all guns
- /god Don't die
- /give quad damage Enables Quad Damage
- /give flight Enables Flight mode
- /give invisibility Enables Invisibility
- /give speed Enables Speed
- /give regeneration Enables Regeneration
- /give battle suit Renders you invincible against lava and splash damage
- /give mega health Gives 100+ health
- /noclip No clip mode
- /cg_thirdperson 1 Third-person view

DEUS EX

Open the user.ini file in the deusex/system directory and change an empty key binding from t= to t=talk (do this for all occurrences of t=). Then press T and enter one of the following codes exactly as shown here to enable the corresponding cheat.

To activate cheatmode, type in set DeusEx.JCDentonMale bCheatsEnabled True in the console. Now you may type any of the codes listed below:

- god God mode
- allimages All images
- allskillpoints All skill points
- allweapons All weapons
- allammo Full ammunition
- allhealth Full health
- allenergy Full energy
- invisible Invisibility
- iamwarren Enables EMP field
- tantalus Kill current target
- sllcredits 10,000 credits
- opensesame Unlock targeted door
- legend Hidden menu
- spawnmass Spawn a mass of enemies

KISS PSYCHO CIRCUS

While playing, press ~ to enter the console, then type:

- Invuln God mode
- GimmieGimmieGimmie All weapons
- NoClip No clipping mode
- NoTarget Monster targeting on/off
- Spectator Fly mode

DID YOU KNOW...
Bill starred in a soft-core porn movie called *Until She Screams...* while working in NY.

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sacrifice™
TO WHICH GOD WILL YOU
MAKE YOURS?

A sacrifice to Charnel GOD OF DEATH

offers the power of destruction and carnage.

I am Charnel, the God of Strife, Lord of Slaughter, Master of Death. Where there is pain, I am. Where there is suffering, I flourish. Without conflict, without struggle, without me to hate, who would have cause to call themselves just? Only a fool would seek contentment in peace and tranquility.

-- Charnel, God of Death

sacrifice

Your creatures need you! Cast deadly spells to aid them.

Make a Sacrifice, secure your victory, your God feeds well.

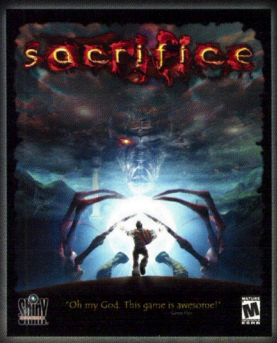
Choose a God...
Make your Sacrifice.

The dark beauty of Charnel's world awaits...

THE ULTIMATE sacrifice

The Holy War is over.

The Demons of Gologotha have been banished, yet the cost has been terribly high. The Creator, God of the Fyllid, has been defeated and the faith of the people has begun to wane. Petty squabbles among the five remaining Gods has caused the land to split into five mystical territories - each at war with one another. Into this divided land steps a wizard, a man haunted by his past, whose choices will shape the future. Which God will he choose? Will he sacrifice himself to change this world for the better, or will what remains of this world be sacrificed for one God's alone?



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MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Animated Blood and Gore
Animated Violence

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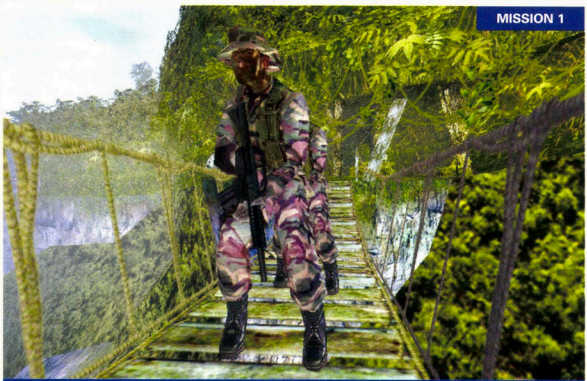
Jeremy will come into the mailroom. If there's somebody else in there using the fax machine, entertain Jeremy with a song and dance. He will smile happily and clap along. When he's finished, use your Shrinker to make Jeremy three inches tall. Now watch him jump and clap!

RAINBOW SIX COVERT OPS

Tangos got you down? Keep losing hostages? Those three new missions in *Covert Operations Essentials* are tough, but don't fret! When it comes to (computer-game) terrorist elimination, we're experts.



Don't even think about crossing this bridge without proper sniper coverage.

MISSION 1 LUCKY SNARE

Mind those snipers! The single most important tactic in this mission is *sniper coverage*. Those tangos are dug in well and have a perfect line-of-sight to the bridge connecting the two parts of the level. To make matters even worse, their camouflage blends in perfectly with the foliage, making them especially hard to spot. Don't worry about being silent right off the bat: you can use noise to draw out tangos hiding in easily defendable areas. You'll have quite a few long-range encounters with tangos wearing heavy body armor, so you'll need to bring along some serious firepower.

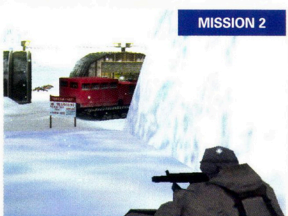
If you decide to go silent, don't opt for anything less than the 10mm MP5. Otherwise, stick with guns like the AUG, M4, or HK G36K. One or two snipers can help, too. There are *always* guards patrolling the tunnel on the side of the level, and well-concealed snipers covering the bridge. The key is to distract them with fire or grenades from one team, and then snipe at them with a second team. It can be tough, and you'll get your ass handed to you from time to time, but keep trying and you'll eventually get it. Once you manage to cross the bridge safely, it's just a matter of good old-fashioned search-and-destroy tactics. Keep your heartbeat sensors handy and don't get over-zealous with the grenades: it's easy to throw one around a corner and accidentally take out a hostage. You'll also have to be quick, because the terrorist will start killing off hostages if you take too long.

MISSION 2 ARCTIC ZEBRA

This mission has a mix of long-range and close-quarters battle, so equip your men accordingly. You can go either for a mix of MP5s and M-16s, or with something universal like an AUG or M4. The best strategy is to use both entrances for a two-pronged attack. It may be smart to take out any snipers visible from the entrances yourself. Your fire will probably draw out a few guards, so dispatch them quickly. Then converge on the main building in the center while keeping an eye out for tangos in the surrounding buildings. Plan to have teams enter the main building from both entrances simultaneously. Then it's just a matter of quick room-clearing and retrieving data from the satellite. Heartbeat sensors make this task much easier.

MISSION 3 BRAZEN HEART

This is a large mission, and it also has a mix of long and close-range situations. Equip your men the same way you did the last mission. Right off the bat, you'll need to creep out of your extraction point area and pick off snipers. They're usually patrolling around the sides of the main control building. Another tip is to go to the open missile silo on the right of your starting point and take out the few guards down there. Next, you'll want a team to capture all three entrances to the complex. There's a front entrance, a rear entrance, and a stairway off to the left. Proceed carefully with the aid of heartbeat sensors. A major trouble spot is a long corridor in the lower levels. Just be sure to move through it slowly and use your sensors to see tangos before they get the drop on you. Other than that, shoot fast and don't miss.



Watch for enemy snipers along the outer edges.

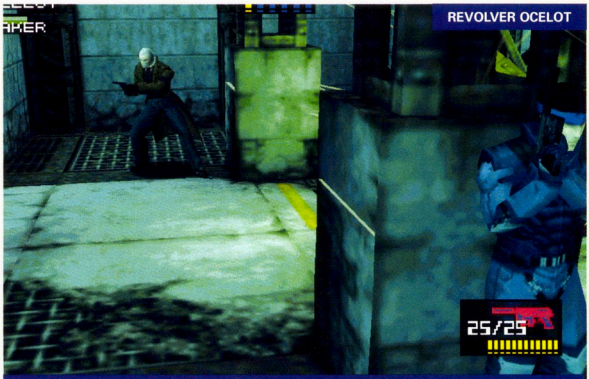
Things can get messy real fast in this corridor.

DID YOU KNOW...
Joe lost 14 games in a row as a pitcher on his college baseball team?

Place a jar over mini-Jeremy so he can't escape. Return to reception. Go down the hallway opposite the receptionist. Make a right where it dead-ends.

METAL GEAR SOLID

Found that your mad *Quake III* skills don't translate so well to console-style gaming? We'll help you make the leap from the mouse to the control pad and kick next-generation Special Forces guys' collective ass.



Don't stay still for a second, or you'll get hit.

REVOLVER OCELOT The first boss, this Russian gunslinger, is so good with his Colt Single-Action Army that he can hit you around corners with ricochets. Beating him is just a matter of patience. His revolver holds only six shots, so your best bet is to run around and dodge his shots (making a figure-eight pattern along the wall opposite to him usually works well) and hit him with your SOCOM while he reloads. If you're quick, you should be able to tag him twice every time he runs out of ammo. Don't use explosives or fire wildly, as you may trigger the C4 rigged around Kenneth Baker (which will kill him and end the game). Pick up the SOCOM ammo in the corners if you run low.

M1 TANK You'll encounter this boss after you leave the prison building. Make sure you have plenty of chaff grenades and regular grenades. First, toss a chaff grenade: this prevents the tank from hitting you with its main cannon. Then get in close and start chucking regular grenades on top of it, and try to get them to land inside the tank through the top hatches. Run circles around the tank to avoid the machine-gun fire. The biggest threat is getting run over by the tank. Just stay on your toes and don't be too aggressive. Get close, lob a few grenades, and then get back to avoid any counterattacks. Repeat until the tank is kaput.

CYBORG NINJA Don't bother with guns or explosives: they won't affect him at all. Run up and give him the one-two combo. He'll put away his sword and fight you barehanded. Be patient: it's safest to use two punches at a time or he might get a hit in. If you miss a punch, don't continue with the combo. Instead, back away until you can get in a clear shot. The ninja deals a lot more energy than you do, so don't stand toe-to-toe with him. After you've hurt him enough, he'll turn invisible. Use your thermal goggles and when he re-appears to take a swing at you, back out and then punch him as he's recovering from his attack. When you get his health really far down, an energy barrier will form around him. This barrier flashes on and off, so hit him between flashes. But the easiest thing to do is pull out a gun or a grenade and finish him off.

PSYCHO MANTIS Cut lose with your FAMAS and watch him whine as you fill his skinny ass with lead. When he turns invisible, equip your thermal goggles. Whenever he tries to get Meryl to kill you, just punch her out or flip her around, but be sure not to kill her, as that will end the game.

NOTE: If you have a joystick or gamepad plugged into your computer along with your keyboard/mouse, Psycho Mantis will actually be able to 'read your mind'. This makes him almost impossible to beat without using a special trick: changing controllers. If you've been playing the game with a keyboard, switch to your joypad/joystick; or if you've been

M1 TANK

If your health runs low, look for rations near the top of this area.

CYBORG NINJA

When fighting the ninja, just remember to stick and move.

PSYCHO MANTIS

Don't bother trying to hit him with any grenades or explosives.

SNIPER WOLF

If you suddenly find your scope facing the wall, unequip your gun.

www.DailyRadar.com

Follow the hall, going past the closed office doors, until you reach the small kitchen. Find the leftover pizza in the fridge. Take it out and put it on the table.

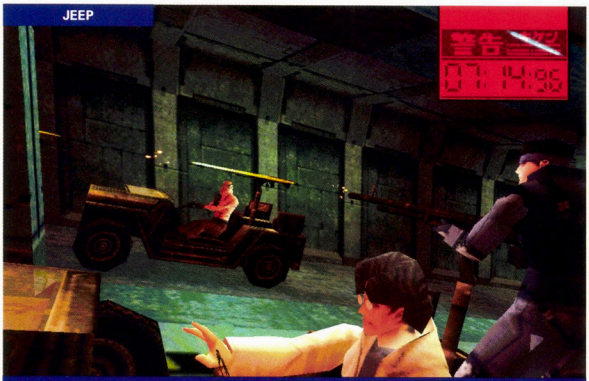
playing with a joypad/joystick, switch to the keyboard. Using this technique, he'll no longer be psychic, and you'll be able to hit him with your attacks.

SNIPER WOLF There's no trick here: just skill. Make sure you have plenty of Diazepam to keep your aim steady. Sniper Wolf will be on the second level at the end of the hallway. Be sure to keep some rations as your active inventory item to heal yourself when necessary. You can't hit her when she's running or when she's taking cover, so save your shots for when you can get a sure hit. Just make sure you shoot straight and don't miss. Good luck.

THE HIND D Defeating Liquid Snake in the Hind D is fairly straightforward. First off, make sure you have rations and plenty of Stinger missiles. You'll have to pay attention to your radar and the sounds you hear. Don't fire your Stingers until you have a full lock and a clear line of sight to the Hind. Take cover from the Hind's machinegun fire using the structures in the middle of the platform. You can tell what direction the Hind's shots are coming from by its tracers. Once again, patience is key. If you run out of missiles, you'll find more on the upper platform. It's a simple matter of taking cover when Liquid opens fire, and popping out to fire off your Stinger when he's visible.

SNIPER WOLF 2 Sniper Wolf's got the drop on you again, this time it'll be a fight to the death. Thankfully, there's a cheap little trick you can use to take her out on your own terms. Rather than bothering with a costly and dangerous sniper vs. sniper duel, take cover in an area where she can't get a clear shot at you (such as behind a building or truck) and use your Nikita guided missiles. Fire them off and use the first-person mode to guide them to her. If you run out of missiles, you'll have to go back to using the sniper rifle. For this, you'll just have to be quick, and have more Diazepam. She'll use the trees as cover, and you'll be able to see her breath when she's behind them.

JEEP



Just lay on the trigger during this sequence — your ammo is unlimited.

VULCAN RAVEN The easiest way to beat this mini-gun–wielding shaman is to drop a few claymores along his path. He'll walk into them and take a fair amount of damage. Keep doing this until he falls. If he starts to wander away from your claymore, let him get a peek at you and then duck behind cover. Don't let him catch you in the open: his mini-gun can cause extreme damage. If you run out of claymores, you can hurt him with the Stinger or the Nikita. Be careful with the Nikita, though: he can shoot them out of the air.

METAL GEAR REX Watch your life gauge here — it can drop fast. Equip your body armor so that you take less damage, but be sure to switch to rations when your life meter is low. Use chaff grenades to disable his targeting systems and then use your Stinger on its radar dome (on the right side). Run in a circular pattern to evade the machine gun fire. If you run out of ammo, you'll find more along the walls to the left and the right. After you've dealt enough damage to Rex, the Cyborg Ninja shows up and helps you out. A cutscene will play. After it ends, you'll have to fight Rex again. This time, aim for the cockpit and use the same tactics as before.

LIQUID SNAKE Use tactics similar to the ones you used against the ninja. If you miss a punch, don't continue with the combo or you'll get hit. Your best chance to land some hits on Liquid is after he's taken a swing at you. If you can get close and then back away, he'll swing and miss. That's when you can move in and beat him down. Don't waste your time swinging at him when he's flashing: he's invulnerable. Wait until the flashing stops and attack. Be sure to watch for his charge — it's very powerful — and try to stay away from the edges or you can get knocked off. Whittle him down and don't be too aggressive.

JEEP This isn't really a boss, but it is the last segment of the game. When you get on the jeep, be sure to shoot all the barrels to blow open the roadblocks. Also, be sure to have your rations equipped so you can heal yourself in a hurry. There's no real trick to this: just shoot and don't stop shooting until everyone is dead. When Liquid shows up again, just keep shooting. Remember, as long as he's taking cover, he can't take a shot at you. All you need to do is survive until the jeep segments ends.

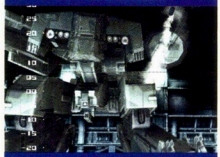
SNIPER WOLF 2

Sniper Wolf won't even know what hit her when you use the Nikita.

VULCAN RAVEN

He may be big, but he isn't too bright when it comes to spotting mines.

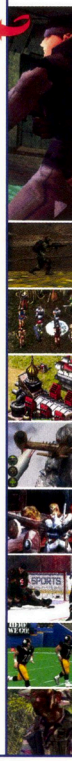
METAL GEAR REX



Don't get too far from it or else it'll launch homing missiles at you.

LIQUID SNAKE

The hardest part here is beating him within the two-minute time limit.



Find the sleeping pills in the cupboard. Make sure no one is around, and then sprinkle liberal amounts of them over the pizza. Take the pizza back out into the hallway and continue onward. Turn into the large open newsroom on your right. This is *PC Gamer*.

FIREARMS

WHERE CAN YOU GET IT?
***Firearms* is in the *Half-Life Platinum Edition* (available now), or you can download it for *free* at *www.firearmsmod.com*. (You must already have *Half-Life* to play the game.)**

Just a simple little mod, right? Wrong. *Firearms* is quite simply one of the deepest multiplayer FPS games ever. Pick up tips from this strategy, dominate the servers, and we might even let you play against us someday.

These guys didn't use their bandages. Don't make the same mistake.

10 RELATIVELY EASY STEPS TO *FIREARMS* DOMINATION

Like any game, there are certain tactics you *must* learn in order to win at *Firearms*. If you can't comprehend and use them, you might as well go back to firing rockets at other players' feet. As in any team-based game played on the Internet, it isn't likely you'll do much communicating. So as a public courtesy to anyone who ever plays *Firearms*, we're going to provide you with all the information you need to be a successful team player all on your own.

WINNING THE BATTLE

■ LOCATION IS EVERYTHING

It's not always how many times you shoot somebody, but *where* you shoot them. As you'd expect, a head shot is the most lethal. However, *Firearms* characters can choose to place armor in different positions, meaning that the head isn't always the best target. One of the best places to shoot people is in the legs. Players rarely use the leggings (leg armor), and a shot in the leg slows an opponent down so you can finish 'em off easily.

■ KNOW THE MAP

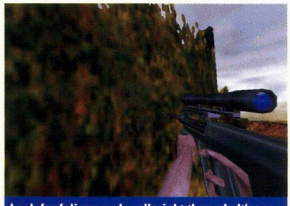
Whatever map you play, you must learn every inch of it. Each map is incredibly well balanced and features key choke points, sniping positions, and shortcuts. Learn them all and you'll have a huge advantage over the enemy.

■ YOU DO NEED STINKIN' BANDAGES

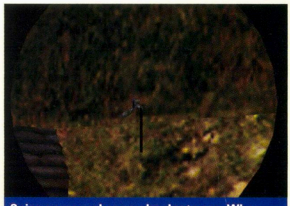
Always pick up bandages (or pick/create a character who carries them). Bandages stop wounds from bleeding. If you can't stop the bleeding, you die. Don't bandage in the middle of a battle: go to a corner or wait until you've finished off your opponent.

■ SMALLER TARGETS = HARDER SHOTS

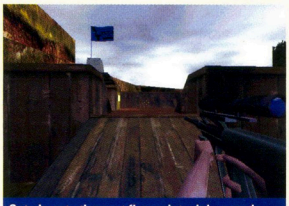
Crouching is a joke in *Quake*, where precision is about as important as patience, but in *Firearms*, being precise is key. The realistic damage means that if you miss your first shot, odds are you'll be dead before you can get off a second. Thus, crouching and lying prone are extremely useful. They give your opponent a smaller target, allow you to hide behind crates, and generally piss off your enemies.



Look for foliage and walk right through. It's usually a shortcut, and a great place to camp.



Going prone makes you harder to see. When people run right by you, shoot 'em in the back!



Get close to the next flag point, pick a good hiding spot, and wait for the enemy to run by.

DID YOU KNOW...
Dan's ex-girlfriend was a college dormmate of Danica McKellar from *The Wonder Years*?

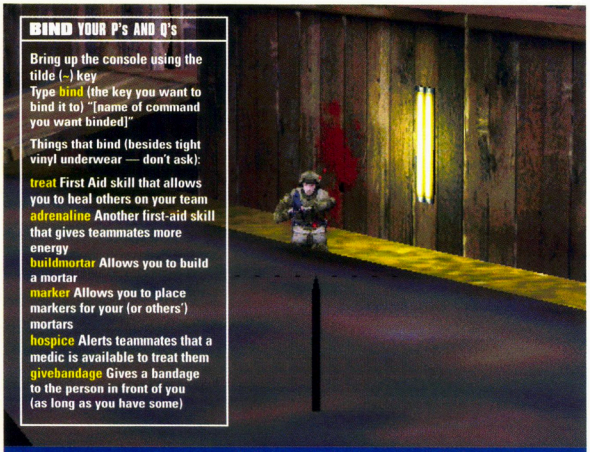
Announce yourself as a PR person who has brought pizza for everybody. The remaining staffers will immediately crowd around the pizza. Step out of the way and let them chow down. Note that Editor-in-Chief Rob Smith will not eat any, since he is not American and hates pizza.

BIND YOUR P's AND Q's

Bring up the console using the tilde (~) key
Type **bind** (the key you want to bind it to) "[name of command you want binded]"

Things that bind (besides tight vinyl underwear — don't ask):

treat First Aid skill that allows you to heal others on your team
adrenaline Another first-aid skill that gives teammates more energy
buildmortar Allows you to build a mortar
marker Allows you to place markers for your (or others') mortars
hospice Alerts teammates that a medic is available to treat them
givebandage Gives a bandage to the person in front of you (as long as you have some)



With a good zoom on a sniper (or assault) rifle set to single shot, you can pick off enemies for hours.

EQUIP FOR THE JOB

The variety of weapons, armor, and skills in *Firearms* means you have a choice of what kind of character you are. Here are three good quick configs.

HOW TO SET UP A QUICK CONFIG

Go to the *Firearms* directory in your *Half-Life* folder. Now find the Menu folder and look for the file *quick-config.txt*. (Open it, duh.) Now in another window, open your *quick config tokens* file. Find the weapons you want, copy them, and paste them into the quick config. (Remember, there's still a limit on credits that can't be surpassed.) Now save your file and — voilà! — you've got a quick config the next time you play. You can also change the pre-configs into your own by finding their text file (e.g., *Berserker.txt*). Armor tokens must come first; any mistakes will result in the loss of tokens and no item or skill, so be careful.

DEFENSE

- heavy_armor
- armor_helmet
- armor_arms
- armor_legs
- m60
- benelli

STRENGTHS Setting up shop at a flag and mowing down anyone who dares enter your area.
WEAKNESSES Gets tired easily, bad for travelling long distances, and is slow.

ALL-PURPOSE

- medium_armor
- armor_helmet
- armor_arms
- aug
- frag
- benelli

STRENGTHS Does everything pretty well. Good stopping power, sniping capabilities, decent armor, grenades, and good stamina.
WEAKNESSES Isn't the best at anything — not the fastest or the strongest.

FLAG RUNNER

- light_armor
- m16
- bandages
- frag
- mp5k

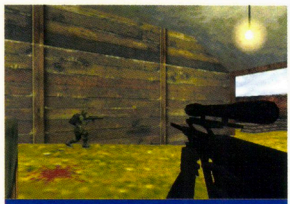
STRENGTHS Great stamina, speed, and a weapon that's great on the run.
WEAKNESSES No armor means "run, run, run."

IT'S NOT CAMPING IF YOU WIN

The key to *Firearms* isn't how many people you kill; it's how many flags you get. So setting up camp near a key point is not only accepted, but also required for victory. Find a spot where you can go prone (making you harder to see) and have cover on all sides (each map has several such locations). Then take aim and proceed to kill anything that comes in your sights. If you're firing from far away, be sure to switch your rate of fire to single shots for greater accuracy and less noise. (See "Bind your P's and Q's" for easy one-key fire-rate switching.)

USE COVER

The maps in *Firearms* all have sandbags, trees, and various other 3D objects that are perfect for a firefight. Standing in the open, firing like a madman, and screaming "who else wants some" may feel good, but it'll usually end in your death.



Everyone is facing the other way, making your task of securing the flag point that much easier.

EARS TO THE GROUND

The biggest key to dominating *Firearms* is getting a jump on your opponent (the first shot), one of the best ways to do this is to crank the volume and listen for footsteps (to counter this, make Stealth one of your first skill acquisitions — it's extremely useful). Sit still and listen for the enemy and you'll get the kill every time.

WINNING THE WAR

THE "RUN-BY"

Sometimes the best way to win a battle is to not have a battle at all. Pick points on the map where the enemy is gathering for a mass advance on the next flag point and hide. Even if you don't manage to make it all the way to their base, you'll stop their advance by capturing the flag behind them.

THE "DOUBLE-BACK"

Instead of taking all of the flags in order, immediately advance deep into the enemy's base and hide. See how many points your team can secure, then carefully double back and pick up the next point. Players don't expect attacks or captures to come from behind, and you'll often go unnoticed.

THE "STAGGER"

This one is going to take some coordination, but if you're playing on a team that's any good, it'll be easy to communicate. Send a team message that says, "I'll get 5 (or whatever the last capture point is), someone else get 4 (whatever the second-to-last capture point is), and everybody else get 3 (generally the spot of most battles). If it works right and everybody does their job, you can get the last three flag points in a matter of seconds.

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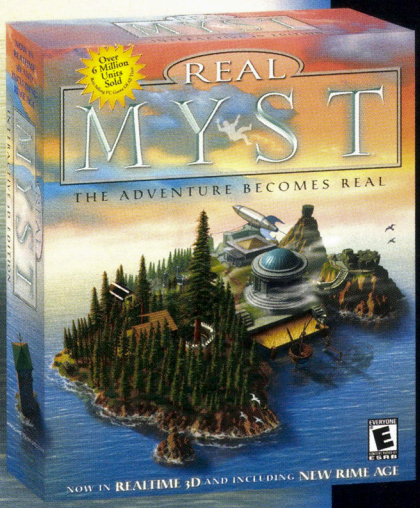

WINDOWS 95/98/2000/ME
PC CD-ROM

www.realmyst.com

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

CYAN

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Leave the newsroom and go wait in the reception area. After 10 minutes or so, go back to the *PC Gamer* newsroom. All staffers but Rob will be asleep at their workstation. It's time to defeat the end-stage boss.

BALDUR'S GATE II

Selling like hot cakes — and rightfully so — this epic RPG is a monster. This month we proudly present part two of our mammoth *BGII* walkthrough. Get started...there's only another 100 or so hours of gameplay to go.

Welcome back. Last month we left off at the defeat of Irenicus in Chapter IV. Moving right along...once Irenicus is beaten it's decision time. If using the portal, the party will teleport to the entrance to Underdark; if you choose to take the long way, head back into Brynlaw. Either route is fine: the long route will lead to Sahuagin City and will yield a chunk of exp. and a few good items along the way, but it's by no means necessary. The choice depends on your level of patience.

Don't forget to loot the treasury in Sahuagin city!

SAHUAGIN CITY

Getting to Sahuagin City is a snap — just do exactly what Saemon says once you find him in the Vulgar Monkey. If you used the "crazy man" method of getting into the Asylum, there is a stop you'll want to make in Brynlaw. The house you want to go to is to the northeast. A guy named Perth will attack your party once you're inside. Kill him and grab the Book of Infinite Spells. Otherwise, follow the quests for Saemon. You'll get into a few fights, but nothing particularly difficult. The boat will take sail and then you'll run into some trouble, eventually landing in Sahuagin City.

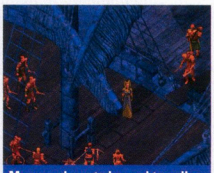
This is a pretty straightforward level. First, talk to the king. He'll want the rebels destroyed. Agree with him and start the quest. Talk to the Priestess to get the Rebel Orb. Once in the city head south, ignoring any warnings you may receive along the way, and then head into the dangerous area. Detect traps in the area and then deal with the imps. The answers to the riddle here are (from Elimenster and then moving clockwise): Pipe, Staff, Pendant, Helmet...and Drizzt gets the Scimitar. Kill the Beholder, don't be swayed by his nice-guy attitude — he's a Beholder, for Pete's sake!

Make sure to head underneath the big fish mouth on the map. You'll get into a fight with the rebels but you'll also get a Cloak of Mirroring, which totally rocks! Search for the staircase that leads into what looks like a spider's rear-end. The door at the end of the hallway leads to the prince. Talk to him and decide for yourself which one of these lowlifes you want to help.

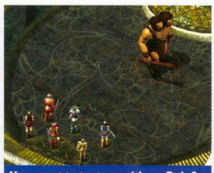
Head back to the king, give him the fake heart, and then kick some ass. Once he's toast, the Prince will show up. Talk to

SAHUAGIN CITY THE TOUGH GUY METHOD

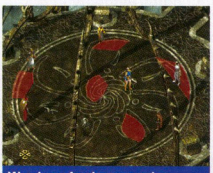
These Sahuagin aren't exactly "good" creatures, and more importantly, they're weak. So, if you want to go agro on the entire city and wipe them all out, feel free! When the Priestess at the start of the level asks you to help, just tell her that she's part of an evil race you have no intentions of helping. She'll go bonkers along with the rest of the fish folk and then it's time for a blood bath! The best way to go about this task is to hack everyone up, then go to the prince and get him installed as the new king.



Man, you have to be mad to call a woman a Ravening Ditch-Pig.



You want to test us with an Ettin? You've *got* to be kidding!



Watch out for the traps when answering the Imp question.

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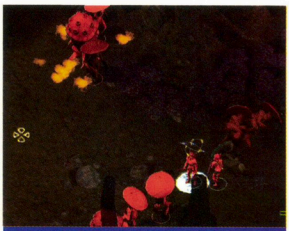
Sneak up carefully on Rob. He has a rear-view mirror clipped to the side of his monitor, so you must carefully angle your approach. Once you're behind Rob, attack him. (It doesn't matter what you attack with.)

Kill the Silver dragon to get blood to create human skin armor. Creepy!



Underdark has a group of those annoying spore guys. Remember to use distance attacks!

him for exp and make certain to loot the treasury. Use the magic rope to head down the hole, back to where you met the Prince the first time. You'll end up at the entrance to Underdark just as if you had used the portal at the end of chapter IV.

CHAPTER V

UNDERDARK

There are plenty of little things to do in Underdark, but only two quests are necessary to push the plot forward. Head to the north and west until you find the Gnomes. They have an Inn plus a guy who will buy and sell items. You'll also find a group of dwarves close to the original entrance to the Underdark that can buy and sell, as well, but their prices are pretty bad. Talk to the gnome at Innkeep and he'll lay out the first quest.

You can find the demon to the east by staying north in the gnome area. Be warned though, this demon will put up a tough fight. Be certain to save before engaging in battle. After killing the demon and using the Stoneshape scroll, head back to the gnome, he'll give you the Light Gem.

With the Light Gem you'll be able to find the guardian of the exit. Head back down away from the gnome area and then north and east. Soon, you'll find a bridge guarded by a silver dragon. For the non-D&D experts out there, colored dragons are evil and metallic-based dragons are good. So this dragon is one of the good guys. Speak to the dragon and she'll outline the beginning of the next set of quests that involve infiltrating Ust' Ratha. Once the party is disguised, feel free to head into the city, using the disguise Adalon spoke about.

A word on drow items: they *rock*! But they will also disintegrate as soon as you get back to the surface of the world, so

Ambush! These guys are a real pain in the butt! Make sure you rush 'em to get out of that cramped area.

CHEATER'S CORNER

HEAVY METAL F.A.K.K. 2

To enable the console, go to the Video/Audio Menu, select Advanced Options, and activate the "Console" option. When playing the game, bring down the console by pressing ~. Enter any of the following codes in the console:

- god God mode
- wuss Get all weapons
- notarget No target mode (enemies don't attack)
- noclip No clipping mode (walk through walls)
- give all All weapons, items (health, water)
- health 100 Full health
- hide Invisibility
- show Invisibility off
- killclass [classname] Kill all enemies of [classname]
- eventlist Show all possible commands

ICEWIND DALE

NOTE: These cheats may require version 1.05+. Press Ctrl+Tab to display the console window and then enter the following codes:

- CHEATERSDOPROSPER:ExploreArea(); Show full map
- CHEATERSDOPROSPER:Hans(); Teleport party to pointer
- CHEATERDOPROSPER:SetCurrentXP([number]); Give selected characters indicated experience
- CHEATERDOPROSPER:AddGold([number]); Add indicated gold to party total
- CHEATERDOPROSPER:Midas(); Add 500 gold to party total
- CHEATERSDOPROSPER:FirstAid(); Five healing potions, five antidotes, and one Scroll Of Stone To Flesh

CRIMSON SKIES

PLAY ANY MISSION

In the campaign menu, left-click on the microphone on the left side of the screen and type idaho. A menu will appear in the top right of the screen that will allow you to access any of the missions in the game.

This action will trigger the end-boss transformation. Rob will grow to 15 feet tall and breathe flame.

The golems won't attack 'til you try to grab the eggs. Wimps can send in an invisible person instead of the whole party.

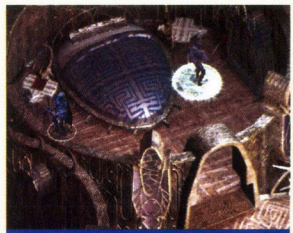
until chapter six is just a series of quick missions. There are a few side quests, however, and if you've got the patience, go for it.

The first step is to talk to a drow named Solaufein at the Male Fight Society. He'll deride you and then order you to the entrance of the city. There, you'll discover that Phaere, the daughter of a high level mucky-muck, has been kidnapped by those pesky Mind Flayers. In order to help him with the rescue you'll need to head back to the Underdark and the eastern edge of the map. On the trip over to the entrance to the Mind Flayer dungeon, whack the random attackers then go east, young man. Once the party catches up with Solaufein, start pausing and buffing up characters or summoning creatures. It's a tough fight because the Mind Flayers have some Umber Hulks with them, and the amount of magic that can get cast is ugly. Best bet is to have enough summoned creatures and party members that someone is in every Mind Flayer's face. Once they are destroyed, Phaere will return to the city. Upon your own return to the city, talk to Solaufein at the entrance and then go to the Tavern.

In the Tavern talk to Phaere. You'll receive a lot of time-critical missions from here on out. Rarely will there be a need to rush, but you shouldn't just waste time either. Eventually these chuckleheads will tell you to head to the southeast of the city and kill a beholder. It's possible to run into a side quest here don't throw away your old armor. Also, the dwarves in Underdark have a golem-killing two-handed weapon for sale. If you're rolling in cash by this point, consider buying it. Later in the game that baby might just make life a lot simpler. What we've detailed here is just a sampling of what can be found in the Underdark. You'll be back here for various quests starting in Ust' Ratha, but you'll never have to explore every little area. Still, if you don't feel the need to rush, explore away: the drow aren't going anywhere.

UST' RATHA

As long as you don't act like a Paladin down here, the disguise will hold. But don't push your luck; act like a good guy too much and you risk being discovered. Just so you know, this entire section up



Show Phaere that you're a "strong and powerful male," and she'll take you to bed. Oh yeah...

If you're good, you'll talk ol' Solaufein out of killing the gnomes.

BALDUR'S GATE CHEATS

SPOILER ALERT

First, you need to find your Baldur.ini file. It should be in the directory that you installed *Baldur's Gate II* under (usually Program Files\BlackIsle\BG2). Open it with notepad or any other text editor. Under [Program Options], add this line: Debug Mode=1. Save it, then start up the game. Now while you're playing, you can bring up the console by pressing Ctrl+ Spacebar. Then type in any of the following cheat codes:

CLUAConsole:SetCurrentXP(#)
Gives experience points. Put a number from 1 to 2,950,000 where the # is. Don't use commas.

CLUAConsole:AddGold(#)
Gives gold. Put the amount of gold you want in where the # is.

CLUAAConsole:ExploreArea()
Shows the entire map of wherever your current location is. Nothing needs to be put between the parentheses.

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The key to defeating him is to dodge his fire-breath balls and time the pattern of his side-to-side strafing. Note his rhythmic movements. It may take you several lives before you figure out the pattern, so it's a good idea to save your game before he starts attacking.

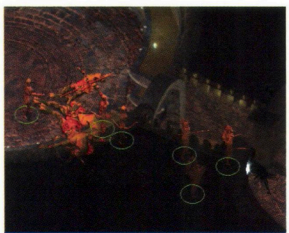
Here's where you get to meet Elhan.

and there, most of them are pretty straightforward and quick. Just remember the time limits and you'll be fine. After killing the Beholder, meet Phaere at the Tavern again.

The next quest involves killing some of those annoying gnomes; too bad they're good guys! The "good" route here is to meet Sol at the Underdark and convince him that you'll handle the situation alone. Then, when the gnomes come, talk 'em into giving up a helm. The bad guy method is to kill 'em and take the helm. Return to Phaere, and give her the helm.

Ah, the intrigues of the drow! Now, the hag has it in for your newfound friend and all-around shmuck, Solaufein. Good guys will return to Sol, spill the beans to him and get the cloak. Bad guys kill Sol, though be warned: killing him will make things much more difficult later on. Upon returning with the cloak, you might get the honor of sleeping with a horny drow, the Holy Grail for D&D geeks everywhere!

After having some fun, the mother matron will request your presence. She requires one of three items. Each dungeon attached to the Underdark (the Kuo-Toa, Mind Flayer and Beholder dungeon) has an item. Fortunately, those fantastic developers at BioWare leave the choice up to you. The Kuo-Toa is the easiest. The Mind Flayer dungeon on the other hand is the toughest, and it's a cave full of horrors. *If*, and this is a big if, you're still carrying around the pommel to the Equalizer sword, the remaining two pieces can be found, one in the Beholder dungeon and one in the Flayer dungeon. We don't like the sword as much as the Holy Avenger but it's still pretty good, especially when



The Kuo-Toa can gang up on you down in their dungeon. Be prepared for a massive fight.

It's the famous Drizzt and his party of adventurers. They don't scare us one bit!

CHEATER'S CORNER

VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE – REDEMPTION

Start the game with the -console parameter. You can do this by modifying the game's shortcut to:

"C:\Program Files\Vampire The Masquerade - Redemption" -console

In single-player mode, press ~ to activate the console. Type in any of the codes listed below:

- **god 0/1** 1 = god mode on, 0 = god mode off
- **cash #** Change cash to #
- **dropcash #** Drops cash amount #
- **xp #** Add # to XP
- **freecasting 0/1** Cast disciplines without using blood, 1 = On, 0 = Off
- **ai** Turns off AI for enemies and your party
- **addalldisciplines #** Increases all disciplines to #
- **revive** Full health (can be done after death)
- **vault** Open personal vault from anywhere in game
- **freeammo** No need for ammo
- **stakme** Stake self
- **killme** True death (revive cannot bring back)
- **totals** List scene info (XP, Gold, etc)
- **addthing #** Spawn item # (e.g., Vitae, Dagger, etc.)
- **advancement** Brings up advancement window
- **framerate 0/1** 1 = Show, 0 = Off
- **frenzyme** Put Christof into frenzy

BLAIR WITCH PROJECT 1 AND 2

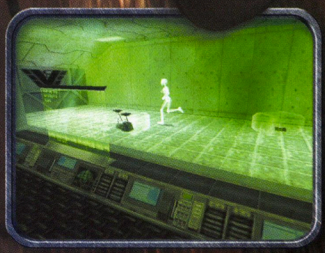
Hit F10 and enter the following cheats:

- **IWORKFORGOD** God mode
- **GETINTOMYBELLY** All weapons
- **BIGHEAD** Big-head mode
- **GIBNPLENTY** Gratuitous dismemberment
- **T2000** Terminator skin
- **GIVEMEFAITH** Restore health
- **NOD3D** Invisibility
- **HELLFREEZEOVER** Freeze enemies
- **BIGSTICKOFDEATH** Get shotgun
- **MEDIUMRARE** Get crossbow
- **GOODTIMESMAN** Get dynamite
- **BURNYOURASSOFF** Get flamethrower
- **MEETMYPALTOMMY** Get tommygun
- **SMILEYNOMORE** Get elephant gun

DID YOU KNOW...
Jeremy broke into a barn when he was 9 years old and tried to free the horses?

TOMB RAIDER CHRONICLES

In light of Lara's recent disappearance, those closest to her gather together at the Croft Estate on a gray, rainy day for a memorial service in her honor. Afterwards, the friends sit quietly together in the study of the Croft Mansion and provide new insights about Lara's past exploits that have until now remained a secret...



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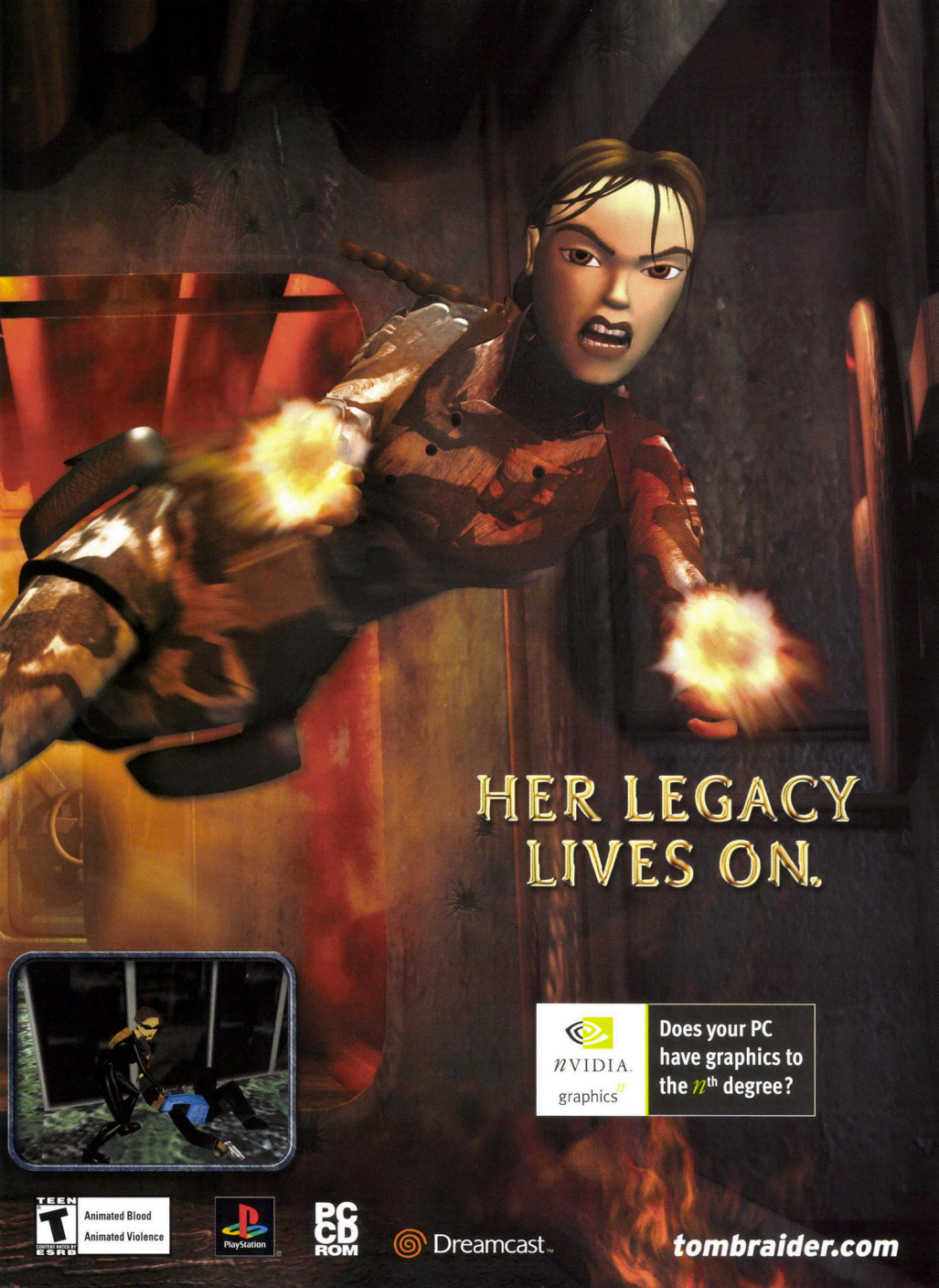
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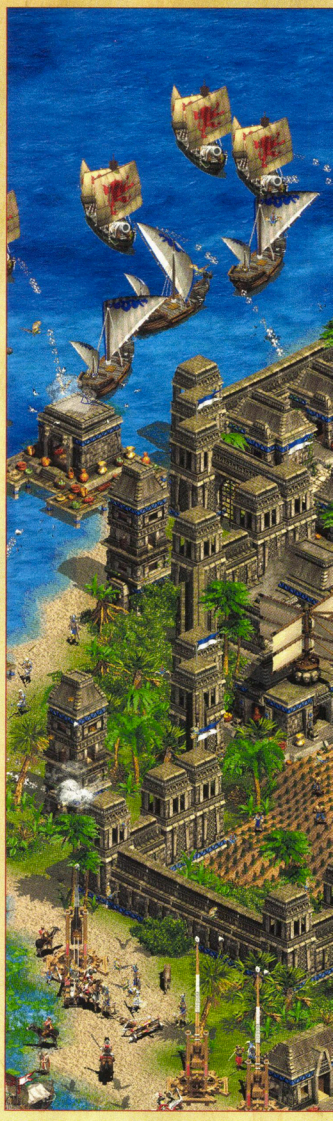

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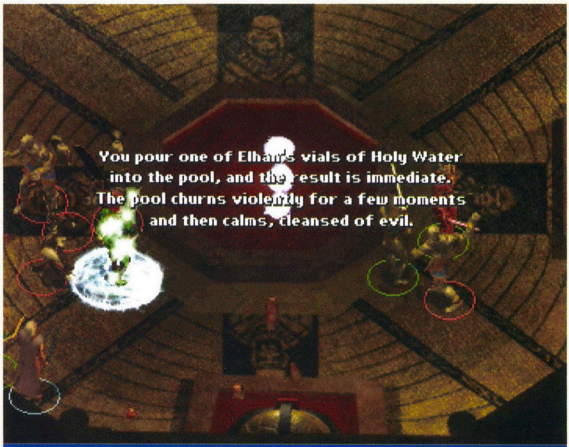
Strafe and hide behind the beer mini-fridge. He will not shoot this. Shoot him between fire-breathball attacks, when he is vulnerable.

Back at Ribald's you'll be able to check out the "special wares."



Remember to put holy water into the pool.

you consider that it's a long sword. Decide which dungeon is right for you and then go for it.

The Kuo-Toa dungeon is simple — whack everything you find. The level 6 mage Death Spell is great here because many of the support guys are less than 8 HD strong. So, if the party gets surrounded by a hoard of Kuo-Toa, light that spell up and watch 'em drop. For a tough fight, place a summoned creature on the Demigorgon altar. The best object they have is the Girdle of Frost Giant Strength, which will set one character's strength to 21. Return to the Matron Madre and give her the blood (from the Prince). Then, meet up with Phaere again back at her pad. You remember the place, right? It's where you lost your virginity. Guess what? She wants to do a double cross. If you've not killed Solaufein, he'll show

CHEATER'S CORNER

THE SIMS

While playing, press Ctrl+Shift+C, then type the following codes:

klapaucius $1,000 Simoleons
rosebud $1,000 Simoleons (if using version 1.1+ or the *Livin' Large* add-on)
water_tool Make your home an island surrounded by water
set_hour # Change time of day to # (1-24)
sim_speed # Game speed to # (-1000 to +1000)
interests View personality and interests of your Sims
autonomy # Change how Sims think on their own (1-100)
grow_grass # Grow grass # (1–150)
map_edit on/off Edit the map
route_balloons on/off Basic tutorial on/off
sweep on/off Shows ticks of the game
tile_info on/off Show or hide tile info
log_mask Set event logging mask
draw_all_frames on/off Draw all frames on and off
history Dumps family history file
edit_char Open Create-A-Character screen
draw_floorable on/off Floorable grid
draw_routes on/off Selected person's path displayed
move_object Move any object
prepare_lot Check and fix required lot objects
preview_anims on/off Preview animations
rotation (0–3) Rotate camera
house # Autoload indicated house #
visitor_control Toggle allowing visitors to be controlled via keyboard

DARK REIGN 2

To play any mission in the game, go to the properties of the shortcut to *Dark Reign 2* and add the following text in the area that says "Target":

-cmd:"gamegod.studiomode 1;sys.runcode studio"

Example: C:\Games\dreign2\dr2.exe -cmd:" gamegod.studiomode 1;sys.runcode studio"

Now start the game and click the tools button in the lower-right corner of the screen. Select "load" in the menu that follows. From there you can select which campaign and mission you want. Once it loads, click on "Tools" and select "Play Mission."

VAPORIZE THY NEIGHBOR.

(LEST THY NEIGHBOR INCINERATE THEE.)

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Now you've got to call down the Nuke on his head. He'll disappear into smoke and you'll hear a victory opera begin to play.

Everyone meet at the blood pool! Then use the elven holy water on the pool to weaken vampires.

up in a bit and give you the option for a double double-cross. Got to love drow culture!

Head back to the temple and sneak around to the south where you'll find the egg room. The two guards outside can be attacked without setting off the other guards. Inside, the golems that are guarding the eggs will, of course, need to be taken out. Grab the real eggs and put the fake eggs from Phaere into the egg container. Return to Phaere and give her the fake eggs from Solaufein. Heh heh. Go to the temple and enjoy the hilarity of the double double-cross! Hide the eggs from the demon and chose the "remain silent" option. Loot the dead bodies of the Mom and Daughter, cast haste on your party and then run as fast as possible to the entrance of the city. The disguise will wear off somewhere before exiting, which will cause the entire city to go aggressive. In other words, it's time to haul serious ass out of there.

Now return with the eggs to the silver dragon and she'll escort you to the exit in the Kuo-Toa Dungeon. Expect a few fights on the way up, but nothing terribly difficult. There are good elves around that will help in the structure leading upward. Upon exiting to the surface, the party will be stopped by "good" elves and the second longest chapter in the game will come to an end.

CHAPTER VI

After blabbing with Elhan, you should have some stakes and holy water, and the party will be free to roam the map again. If you feel like completing some of the quests missed in Chapter II, this is the time to do 'em because the time pressure is off. If it's time to get down to business, then head back to the city. You'll be waylaid en route by the most famous D&D character in the game: Drizzt the Drow. Even though he is a drow he's a good guy, so while it's possible to attack his group and kill them, (tough, very tough) we suggest talking them into helping out with Bodhi, instead. When finally returning to the city, head over to Waukeen's Promenade, where the traders' mart now has "special" wares you can have a peek at for 50 gp.

When you're ready, go to the graveyard — it's time to fight the vampires in their tomb one last time. Expect trouble from the moment you get to the graveyard. If you have a high level cleric, this is the time to fire up Turn Undead. Very high clerics will destroy some of the vampires and turn most of the others, making the level much, much easier — especially if you cast negative plane protection and chaotic commands on the Cleric. That way the cleric can walk in alone with Turn Undead and fry half

CHEATER'S CORNER

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

UNLOCK ALL CHEATS
Pause the game, then hold Numpad 7 and press Spacebar, Spacebar, Spacebar, C, V, Up, Down, Left, Up, C, V, Spacebar, V, B, Spacebar, V, B. The pause screen will shake if you entered the code correctly. Now select the "End Run" option from the pause menu. All cheats, FMV sequences, and skaters will be unlocked.

THIN SKATER
Pause gameplay, Hold Numpad 7 and press: Spacebar, Spacebar, Spacebar, Spacebar, C, Spacebar, Spacebar, Spacebar, Spacebar, C, Spacebar, Spacebar, Spacebar, Spacebar, C. Keep repeating to make skater thinner.

NEVERSOFT SKATERS
At the Main Menu, hold Numpad 7 and press: Up, C, C, V, Right, Up, B, V. Now create a skater with a Neversoft Dev Team name.

SPECIAL METER ALWAYS FULL
Pause gameplay, hold Numpad 7 and press: Spacebar, V, B, B, Up, Left, V, C.

RAISE STATS TO 10
Pause gameplay, hold Numpad 7 and press: Spacebar, V, B, C, V, Up, Down

TURBO MODE
Pause gameplay, hold Numpad 7 and press: Down, C, V, Right, Up, B, Down, C, V, Right, Up, B.

FAT SKATER
Pause gameplay, hold Numpad 7 and press: Spacebar, Spacebar, Spacebar, Spacebar, Left, Spacebar, Spacebar, Spacebar, Spacebar, Left, Spacebar, Spacebar, Spacebar, Spacebar, Left. Keep repeating to make skater fatter.

BLOOD MODE
Pause gameplay, hold Numpad 7 and press: Right, Up, C, V

METAL GEAR SOLID

Add -cheatenable at the end of the command line by editing the shortcut icon for *Metal Gear Solid*. Then use the following keys to activate their corresponding cheats:

F2 God Mode
F4 Unlimited Ammo
F6 Observe Mode
F5 Normal Mode
F7 Fast Level Restart

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A cinematic will begin: a spaceship lands and friendly aliens welcome you aboard, congratulating you on your triumph.

Look — a city in the clouds, er, trees.

the room. Once again you'll need to stake coffins after killing the vampires on the top level of the dungeon. You'll find friends at the blood pool on the top level. Make sure to use the elven holy water on the pool: it will help weaken the remaining vampires.

The spike room is waiting; don't be a dummy, just send in one person hasted and grab the item in the pool or use your cleric again. You'll find a very nice pair of gauntlets. When ready, head to the second level of the dungeon. Things are going to get a bit hairy down here, so check for traps before getting to the big door. Make certain to have the character that will be doing the least in the battle hold the vials of holy water, that way he can cleanse the blood pools inside the main room while everyone else fights. Once Bodhi is dead, stake her coffin and search the place. The next step after her demise is heading back up to Elhan's forest. Chat with him and chapter VI will come to a swift close.

CHAPTER VII

Welcome to the last chapter. It's been a long road getting here and it's not going to get any easier. The chapter is divided into two sections, and our guide here covers the first part in-depth. The last section is one part psychology examination, one part superhero movie, but we're not going to blow the surprise for you. Nope, you're going to have to uncover the last part of the game on your own.

SULDANESSLAR

This city is all about grabbing the needed items to advance the story. It's a difficult level, not because of the puzzles, but because of the sheer quantity of tough battles. Start the level by heading west. The first fight can be difficult. A first group of golems will attack you and it's possible to be jumped from behind by yet another group. If you bought the Rod of Smiting from the Dwarves in the Underdark, now is the time to break that bad-boy out. Have the character with the Rod hit the little golems, and use everyone else to kill the Iron golems.

The first item can be picked up in the building marked "1" on the map. Inside you'll find a puzzle. The answer: Corellan Lotharian – Symbol of Rillifane – Symbol of Water – Tree of Life. Your reward is the Talisman of Rillifane.

Keep heading west and enter the next building at "2." You'll find Demin being held by a group of the Rakshasa. Dust those chumps, save the girl, and listen to her spiel.

Head to "3" and help the War Elves by killing some more Rakshasa. Inside the house you'll find the Moonblade.

Congratulate yourself on getting this far. Most wussy gamers quit long ago.

Yeah, baby! Just another victim!

Cast your protection from evil spell ASAP when you meet up with this guy.

DID YOU KNOW...
Greg's grandfather was a TV weatherman in Los Angeles?

www.DailyRadar.com

A talking dog will debrief you on your next mission objective.

Afterwards, save the game — the next step involves dragon killing.

Head toward "4" and you'll end up in a meadow with a Black Dragon. It's possible to bribe him with the Golden Goblet of Life but you'll be branded a coward for doing so. Instead, just kill the bastard. The best strategy here is to hit that dragon with spells that remove protections and lower resistances. Two hits with that and magic missiles will do a lot of fast damage — especially if they are launched one right after the other. Use summoned creatures to attack first and they'll soak up direct attacks. Watch out for the ensnare attack the dragon uses since it can shut down your melee fighters quick. Be ready with the dispel magic spell to protect party members. Now, by this time you should have all the pieces to summon the Avatar: The Talisman, the Moonblade and the Golden Goblet. On your way back, stop at the structure close to point "4" and enter it. You'll find the Stone Harp inside.

The Temple is at "5" and is full of enemies. Luckily, you've got a friend just waiting to be summoned. That's right, if you can get the three pieces into the altar while the battle is still happening, the avatar will show up and do some serious ass-whooping. Make one last stop at "6" to grab the Stone Horn. Now is a good time to save and rest the party.

It's time to enter the Palace, so pluck some nuts from the Tree of Life and head to The Underland. It's also time for you to find your own way. We'll give you some hints, but no pictures from the final two areas. The Underland is simple: deal with the elementals guarding the parasites, then with the parasites themselves. When facing Irenicus, remember to use spells to knock down his defenses. Once he's without those protections he's just another mage.

The Tests you'll find here are yours to deal with as you see fit, and they will permanently affect your character. Afterwards it'll be time to finish the game. Make certain you have someone that can cast protection from evil more than once. Good luck. Find and fulfill your destiny.

(If you missed last month's strategy covering the first four chapters of the game, you can find it at *www.pcgamer.com*.)

CHEATER'S CORNER

GROUND CONTROL

At the main menu, press M, S, and V simultaneously. This will allow you to type in the following codes:

console Allows ~ to bring up console
god God mode for all units
notgod Disable god mode
gimme maps Play all campaign missions in Custom Game menu
flashlight Flashlight GUI mode
from massive with love Funny textures
the new generation of rts-games Play Secret Sabotage Mission in Custom Game menu

METAL FATIGUE

Press Y before typing in codes:
Lava Unlimited MetaJoules
Robots 3 Combots
Panzer 20 Tanks
Missiles 20 Missile Cars
Time warp Hover trucks work faster

AGE OF EMPIRES II: THE CONQUERORS

Press Enter while playing to bring up the chat box, then type:

ROCK ON 1,000 stone
LUMBERJACK 1,000 wood
ROBIN HOOD 1,000 gold
CHEESE STEAK JIMMY'S 1,000 food
MARCO Reveal map
POLO Remove shadow
AEGIS Fast build
NATURAL WONDERS Control nature
RESIGN You lose
WIMPYWIMPYWIMPY Destroy yourself
I LOVE THE MONKEY HEAD Gives VDML
WOOF WOOF Flying dogs
FURIOUS THE MONKEY BOY Little monkey
HOW DO YOU TURN THIS ON Gives a cobra car
TORPEDO# Kill opponent #
TO SMITHEREENS Gives a Saboteur
BLACK DEATH Destroy all enemies
I R WINNER You win

EARTH 2150

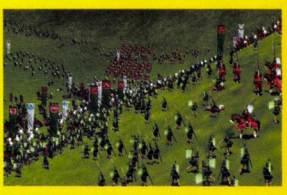
Press Enter and type I_wanna_cheat. Press Enter again, and type one of the following codes:

x-mas_pack Full repair/reload ammo
fireworks Mines
armageddon Meteor shower
no_more_secrets Full map
no_one_hides See all units
i_love_this_game # Give # of CR
i_hate_limits # Set unit limit to # CR
einstein 0/1 Fast Explore, 0 = Off, 1 = On
help_me_please!!! 0/1 Fast explore player Only, 0 = Off, 1 = On
the_hammer_of_thor Kill all enemies at range of 8
massacre Kill Everything at range of 8
see_you_next_life Destroy selected unit
hasta_la_vista_enemigos Destroy all visible Units/Objects
bad_time_bad_place Damage all near units
eagle_eye See all
let_be_darkness Fog

STAR TREK: ARMADA

Press Enter while playing, and then type:

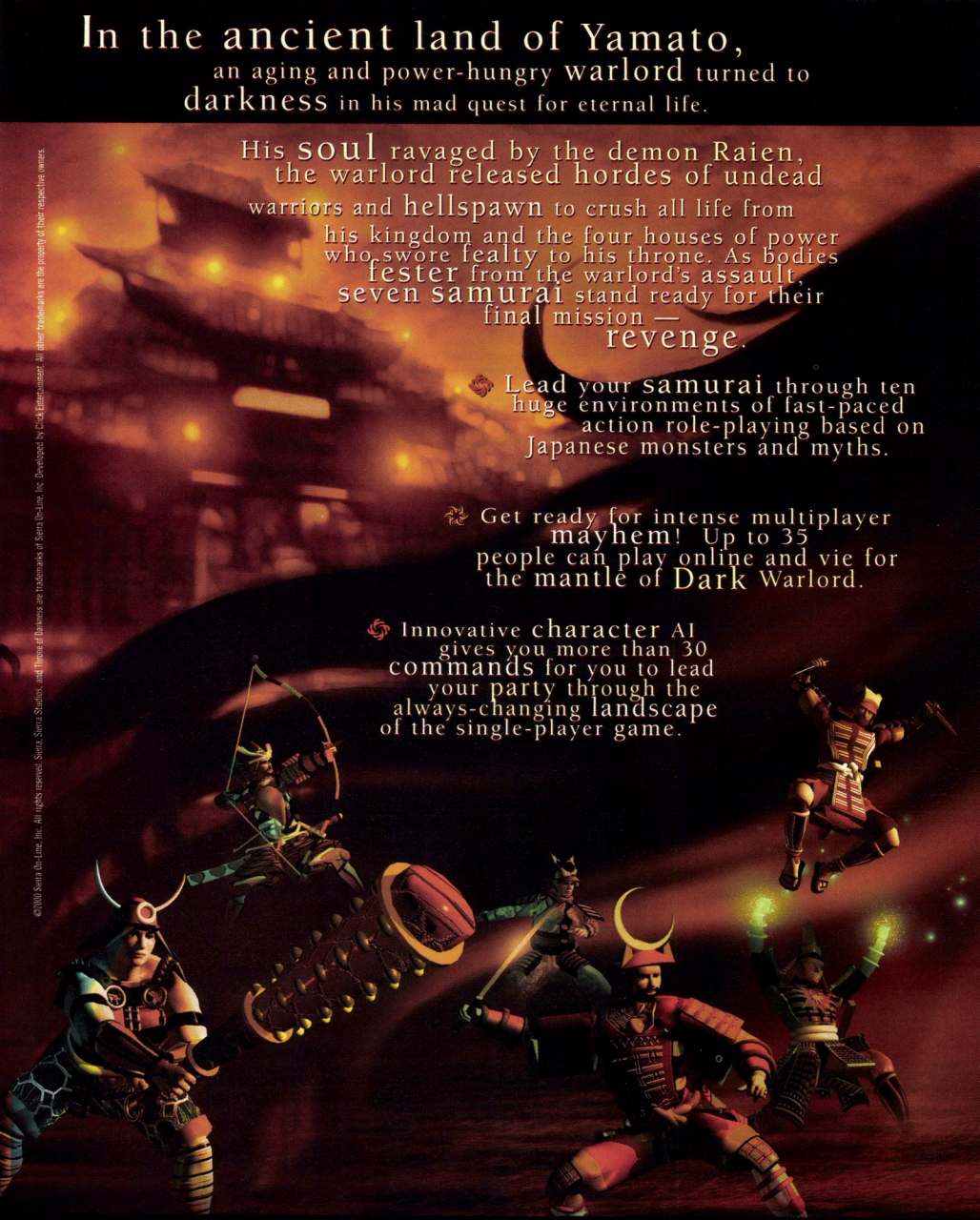
kobayashimaru Skip to next mission
showmethemoney Increases money
phonehome Chat list in multiplayer mode
screwyouguysimgoinghome Boot list in multiplayer mode
canofwhoopass Activate Limited AI over your ships
imouttastepwithreality Enter Gamma Quadrant
youstopmecold Faster ship production
avoidance Faster crew production



SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR

Type these codes in-game:
NOTE: Cheats may not work in versions 1.01+

.matteosartori Reveal map
.daggins Reveal map
.muchkoku. Unlimited KoKu
.conan. Remove construction abilities, negative KoKu
.prototypearmy. Unlimited army life
.ifoundsomecu. Copper in all provinces



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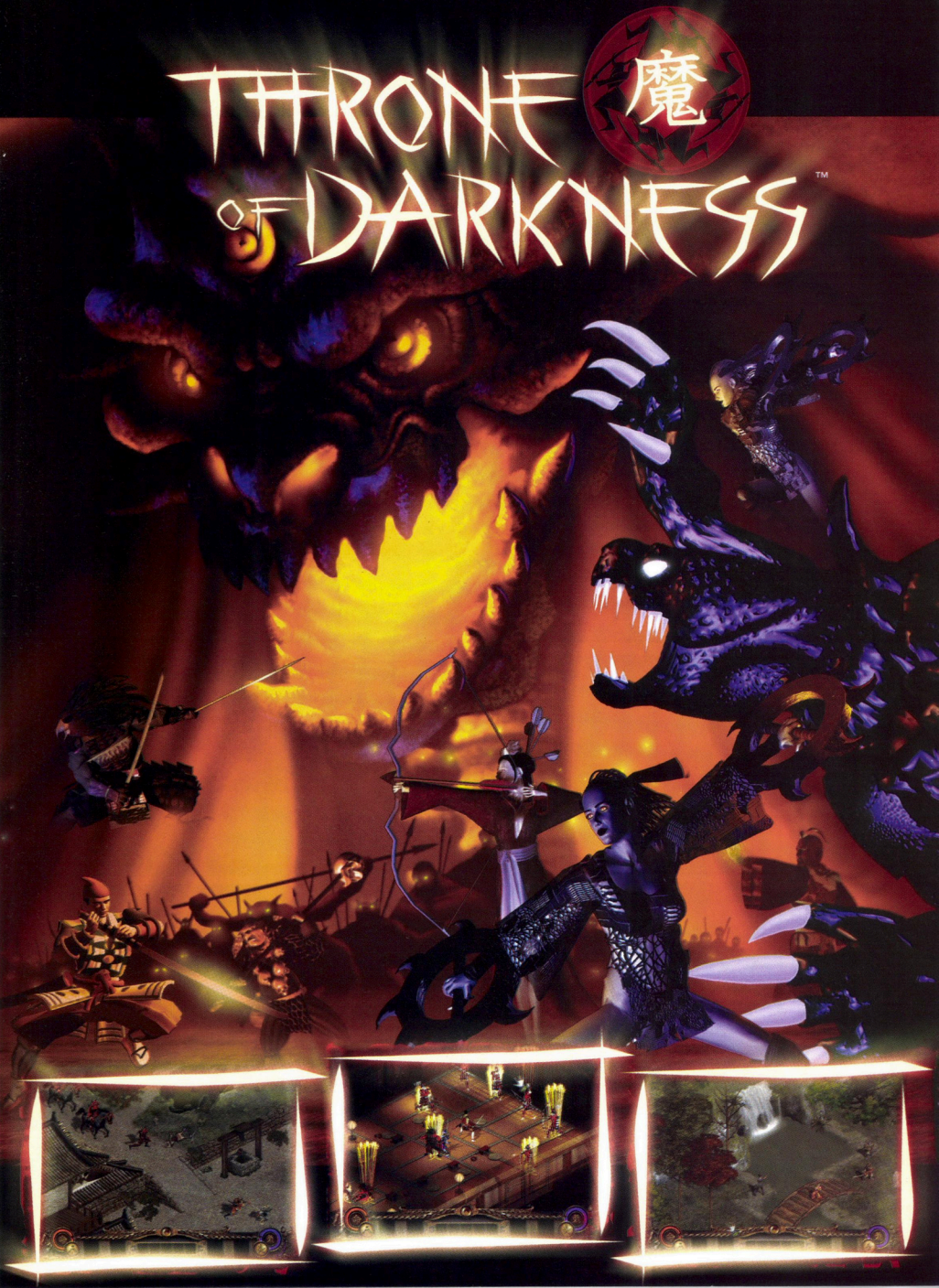
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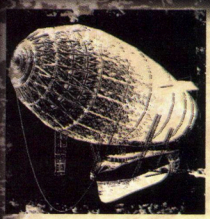

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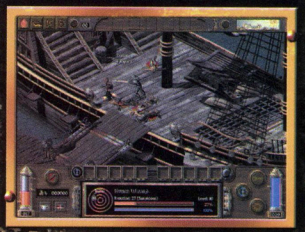

Dozens of quests and a limitless character design let you decide the destiny of your character, be it elf, half-ogre or other sundry races.

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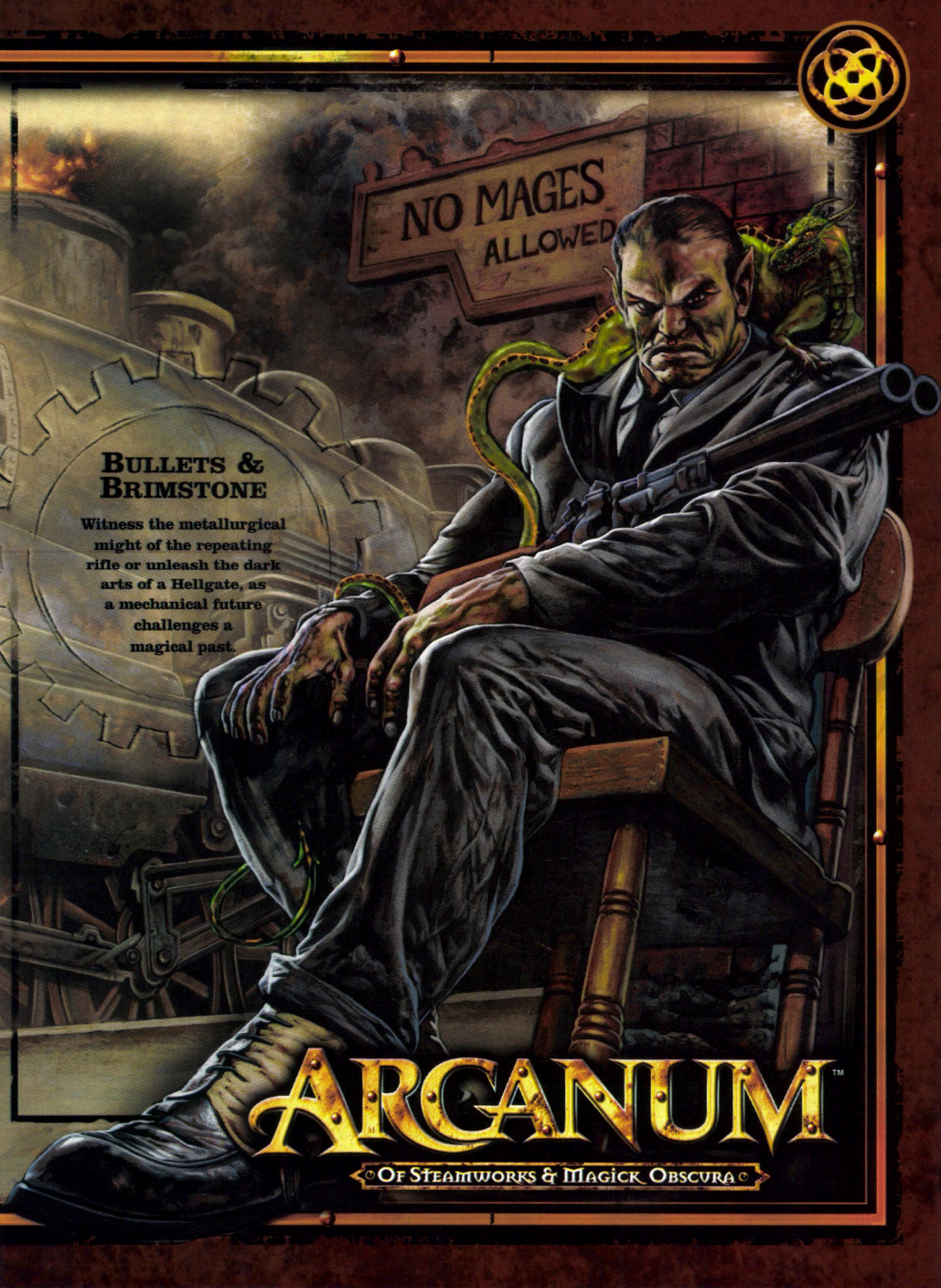
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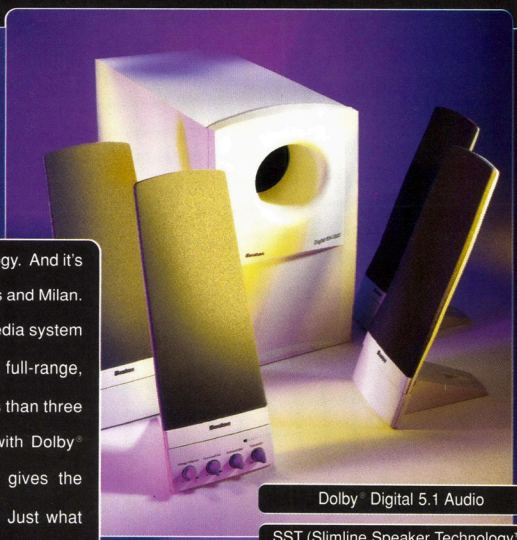

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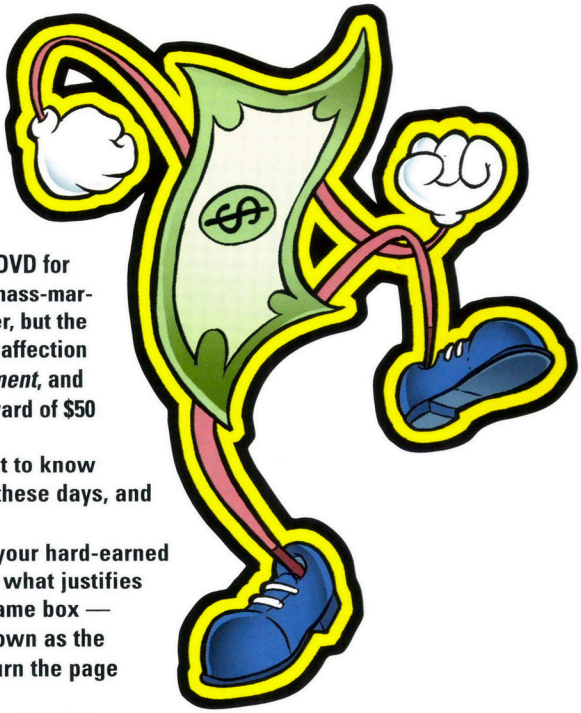
WHERE DOES YOUR MONEY GO?

If you've ever plunked down $39.95 (and up) for a PC game, then you've probably also wondered, "Why do they cost so much?" After all, most music CDs retail for under $20, and even big-budget movie extravaganzas are available on DVD for less than 40 bucks. Sure, some mass-market games sell for $19.99 or under, but the most sought-after objects of our affection — like *Diablo II*, *Unreal Tournament*, and *Baldur's Gate II* — can cost upward of $50 when first released.



We miss our money. We want to know where it went, what it's doing these days, and who it's going out with.

To find out what happens to your hard-earned cash — and, more importantly, what justifies that price tag you see on the game box — you must traverse the maze known as the The Games Industry. To start, turn the page and follow the money.

— Matt Holmes

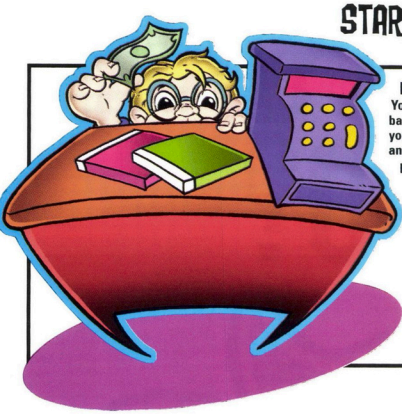
ILLUSTRATIONS BY SUPERCORN

www.DailyRadar.com

GAMES INDUSTRY THE HOME GAME

(Examples of costs are not representative of any one game and may vary widely between publishers.)

START HERE! To play, take out a dollar bill, fold it up, and use it to trace the money's path from your pocket back to the developer.



BUY A GAME

Your money is what the whole industry is based on. Every game you buy is a vote. When you buy *Quake III*, you're voting for id Software and Activision to continue bringing you first-person shooters. Purchasing *Escape From Monkey Island* is your vote for more adventure games (a near-extinct genre) from LucasArts — and if the game sells in massive numbers, for more adventure games in general! Sales numbers are the near-absolute controllers of the quality and content of the games available to you, and your dollars form the very foundation of those sales numbers. Remember, the selection of titles you'll see at retail is a direct result of your past purchases.

$49.95 →

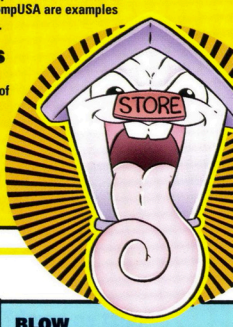
ENTERING RETAIL LAND

Wherever you find shelves full of games and a counter to buy them at, you've found a retailer. EBX, Babbage's, and CompUSA are examples of mainstream retailers.

ONLINE SALES

If you've bought a game over the Internet, some of your money goes to pay for servers, web monkeys, and shipping fees. Most brick-and-mortar retail stores host online versions.

– $0.50



$49.45 →

HIRE A SALES STAFF

The shock troops of the publishing empire, salespeople may face situations where they have only a few minutes to pitch their games to a retail agent responsible for 20 percent of the total retail channel. Salespeople must convince retailers that not only will their game sell big, but it'll sell fast, too. Because of this, you may see more me-too titles on store shelves, since they're far easier to explain ("It's like *C&C*, but in space!") than offbeat titles, which are viewed as confusing and risky.

GET A PR TEAM

Public-relations people are the negotiators and translators between the media and game producers. They make sure clear, measured information penetrates media channels. Without them, print and online media coverage would be chaos, with different sources reporting different and possibly conflicting or irrelevant facts.

ADVERTISING BLITZ!

Those ads you see in magazines, hear on the radio, and watch on TV are the expensive creations of either externally hired advertisers or the publisher's in-house staff. Once an ad is made, the publisher must buy a slot for it, and, depending on its size, length, or how long the publisher wants it there, they'll pay a pretty penny. Advertising accounts for around 75 percent of a game's entire marketing budget.

– $5.00

$25.50 →

PRODUCTION AND SHIPPING

Printing a game's CDs, DVDs, manuals, and/or boxes costs anywhere from $1.50 to $5.00 or more if you've bought a collector's edition in a fancy tin container. Even though the retailer eventually pays for shipping, the initial payment comes out of the publisher's pocket, so shipping 100,000 units to thousands of retail outlets can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars — and that's just domestically.

– $5.00

$20.50 → $19.50

CROSS-PROMOTION

Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force was released at nearly the same time as the TV show's season premiere. Advertising the game during the commercials targeted fans of the show who might be interested in buying that game and made it easier for the publisher to reach a valuable demographic, benefiting everyone.

– $1.00

BUY INSERT ADS

When you see inserts in your local paper for Toys "R" Us or EBX, the games you see in these ads are paid spots. Depending on how a product's represented — like an unknown game on a page of hits — you can be sure that thousands of dollars have changed hands to promote it. (Around $80,000 for one Sunday-newspaper insert ad.) The same goes for in-store catalogs and fliers.

– $1.00

BLOW CASH ON MERCHANDISING

T-shirts, posters, keychains, and shelf-talkers (shelf placards that say things like "Sequel to the Award-Winning *Red Alert*!") are paid for by marketing. Not to mention the bizarre tchotchkes — boxer shorts, remote-controlled cars, 3D View-Masters — sent to game journalists hyping new games before their release.

– $0.20

$30.50 ← $31.50 ← $32.50

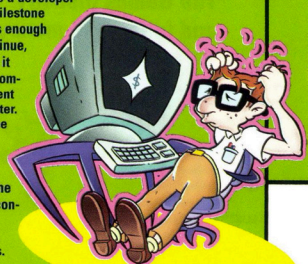
TECH SUPPORT

Paying a staff to hold the line against complaining customers is unavoidable. Either the publisher does it or it gets left up to the developer — though it's usually better to have the expensive creative staff create new games and let the cheap customer-service people service irate customers. These guys generally have a blank check (except in cases like *Ultima IX*, where technical support stopped after a few months).

– $1.00

ENTERING DEVELOPER ISLAND

Developers are the team of programmers and artists who create a game. They are usually paid advances based on "milestones" of progress, such as completing a certain number of levels or perfecting enemy AI. The result can be a developer meeting a milestone just so it has enough cash to continue, even though it knows the completed element could be better. When a game is finished, payment depends entirely on the publisher's contract, and in some cases, sales figures.



WHAT'S A "CHARGE BACK"?

Let's say a retailer agrees to buy 5,000 units of a game if the publisher agrees to spend $25,000 on marketing. They're not exactly talking about the *publisher's* marketing; they mean the publisher spending that much money through *them*. So the publisher will go to the retailer's trade show and buy a booth for $12,500, or buy a spot in the retailer's circular for $40,000. The retailer will then deduct the $25,000 from what they owe the publisher for the 5,000 units they ordered, which may end up being nothing at all.

PAY FOR LOCATION!

Don't kid yourself: the massive square footage used by your standard CompUSA (around 30,000 square feet), or the prime real estate of your neighborhood Electronics Boutique (around 2,500 square feet) isn't cheap. Keep in mind that that space can cost anywhere from a few dollars up to the high double-digits for each square foot, depending on the region in which it's located.

– $4.00

MONEY TO PUBLISHERS AND DISTRIBUTORS

Typically, retail outlets pay for the games customers buy, not for all the games shipped to them. If a game sits on the shelf and doesn't sell, the retailer will ship it back to the publisher and keep whatever promotional incentives and "charge backs" they've collected.

– $5.00

PIRATES CRACKED YOUR GAME. LOSE ONE TURN.

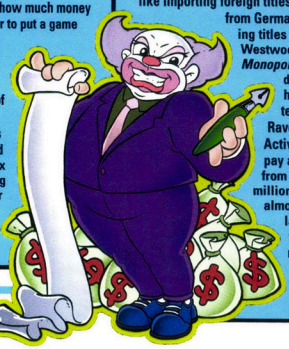
Everyone knows that software piracy hurts the industry, but amid the billion-dollar figures and fuzzy statistics, it's easy to lose sight of the tangible realities of that damage. Here's the real-world diagnosis: for each game box sold at retail, a developer stands to make anywhere from 25 cents to a couple of dollars. That's money that goes into their pocket. The people who sweat blood for years to bring you a title with very slim odds on making a profit, much less getting rich, are essentially gambling on collecting enough quarters to continue. Continue what, you may ask? Not collecting sports cars, or buying a new house in Barbados, but making another game for you — the gamer. When someone downloads a copy of a game they would normally buy if it weren't available for free, they're not only cheating the developer out of that meager money, but they're also telling the developer to stop making games.

– $1.00

$45.45 → $40.45 → $39.45

ENTERING PUBLISHER'S ROW

A publisher is a company that delivers games to consumers. It gets them from a variety of sources, like importing foreign titles (such as *Earth 2150* from Germany) or requisitioning titles (Hasbro hired Westwood to develop *Monopoly* for the PC). It also develops titles in-house using design teams (such as Raven, which works for Activision). Publishers pay advances ranging from thousands up to millions of dollars, and almost always face the largest risks, since they'll be spending millions on a product that may or may not make a profit.



POP FOR ENDCAPS

Those fancy stands that trip you up at the end of store aisles? They're called "endcaps," and publishers pay thousands of dollars for them. (Prices vary, but a general estimate is $40,000 for two weeks placement.)

– $0.50

HOLD A RELEASE PARTY!

A small gathering to show off the latest game might cost a mere $5,000 to $10,000, but hosting an elaborate party at E^3 (Electronics Entertainment Expo) for the press can leave publishers with nothing tangible to show for it but an expensive hangover. The Eidos shindig at E^3 '99 — a party at The House of Blues with the band Everclear, an open bar, and security — cost around $250,000.

– $0.25

BIG PAYOUT TO MARKETING

Marketing is responsible for deciding how much money to spend and where to spend it in order to put a game within reach of as many consumers as possible. The budgets they work with might be two or three times larger than the developer's budget, easily translating into millions of dollars for some titles. They work with advertising and sales people on planning TV, magazine, and online ad campaigns, deciding on box design and advertisements, and making deals with retailers to assure that their game is prominently displayed in every store.

– $6.00

$32.70 ← $33.20 ← $33.45

PRODUCTION COSTS

Full-motion-video shoots can run from tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars or more, and may require set construction, hiring professional studios and actors, and travel to exotic locations. *Wing Commander IV*'s FMV took nine weeks to shoot in Hollywood and cost a total of $8 million, while *C&C: Tiberian Sun*'s team spent days under the blistering sun of Nevada's Red Rock Canyon National Park filming cut scenes.

– $4.00

PAYING SALARIES

Keeping money flowing to a game's creators is absolutely critical to having it see the light of day. A team is likely to be living off of the advances paid by a publisher, assuming it has found one. Although a few projects have been financed internally, most games are created using a publisher's money. Not only that, but hiring Quality Assurance (aka game testers) to do thorough bug testing so the developer can avoid making a post-release patch costs plenty, too.

– $6.00

LICENSING A FRANCHISE

Depending on the deal, using the *D&D*, *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, or *Soldier of Fortune* name may cost tens of thousands of dollars in extra fees. On top of that, licensees also get a small royalty for each game sold. The hope is that the strength of the franchise will draw enough fans into buying the game that the publisher can at least recoup the cost of the license.

– $2.00

LICENSING AN ENGINE

The LithTech, *Unreal Tournament*, and *Quake III* engines are all available to license: $250,000 for a LithTech game, $250,000 to $500,000 for the *UT* engine, and, for the *Quake III* engine, a $300,000 guarantee against an 8 percent royalty of the game's wholesale price. That's a huge chunk of change, and maybe even a hearty slice of the finished pie.

– $2.50

THE DEVELOPER'S OVERHEAD

And finally, the nuts and bolts of running a developing house: buying or leasing office space, computers, software packages like 3D Studio, software licenses, and even a *Tekken* arcade unit for the company rec room. A couple of hundred thousand dollars might be laid to rest right here. (At one time, Ion Storm burned nearly $900,000 a month for salaries and business costs.)

– $5.00

$15.50 → $9.50 → $7.50 → $5.00 → $0

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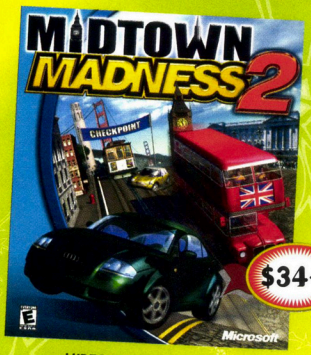

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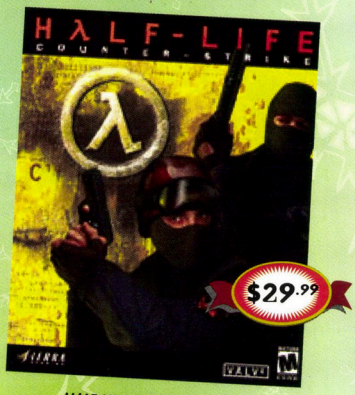

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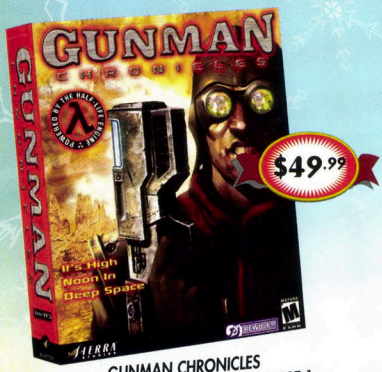

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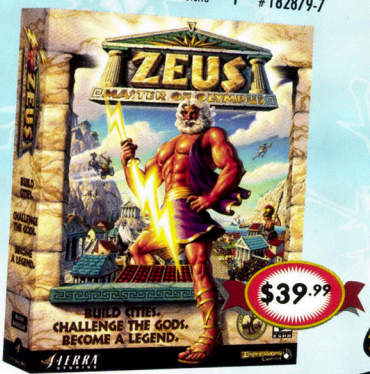

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Windows CD Rom | RedStorm | #182952-2

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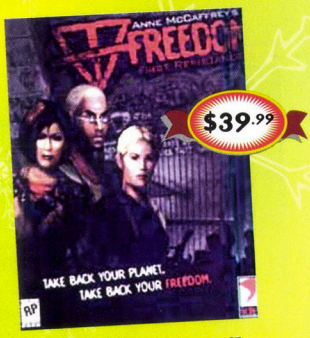

FREEDOM: FIRST RESISTANCE
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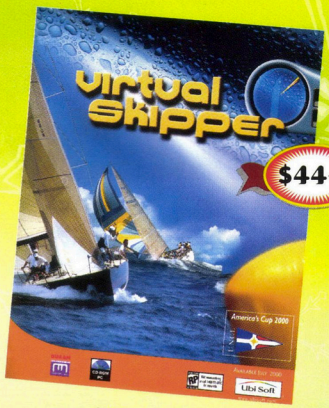

VIRTUAL SKIPPER
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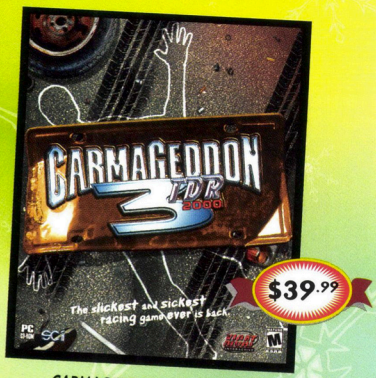

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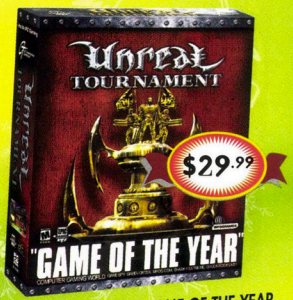

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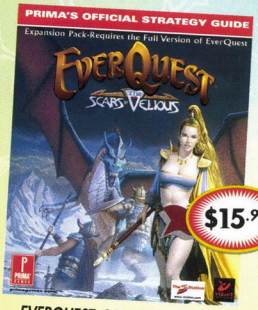

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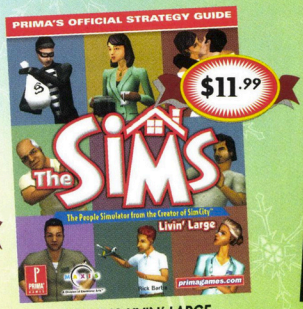

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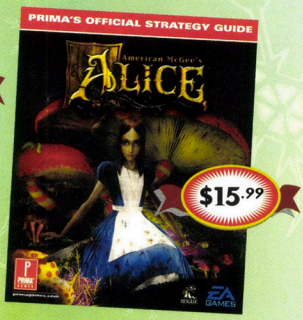

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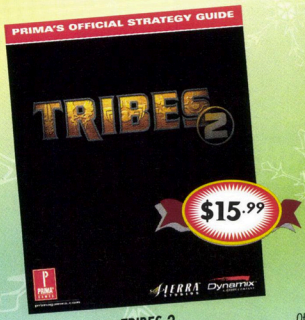

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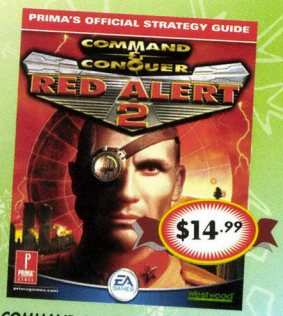

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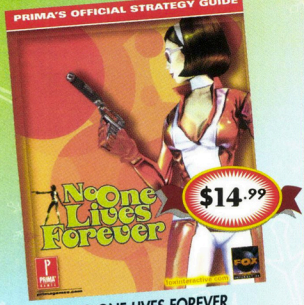

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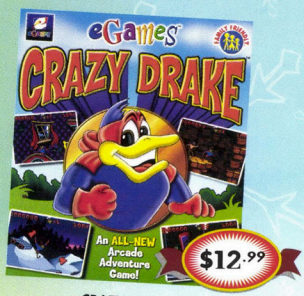

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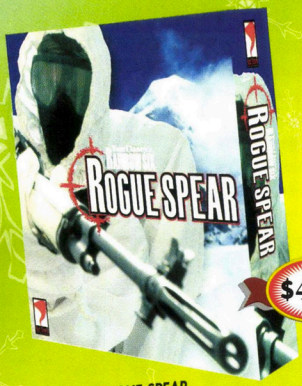

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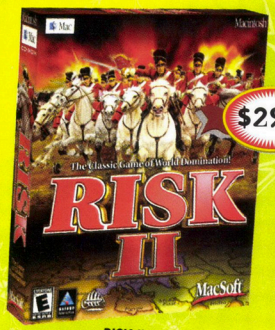

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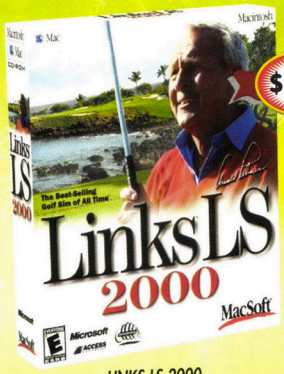

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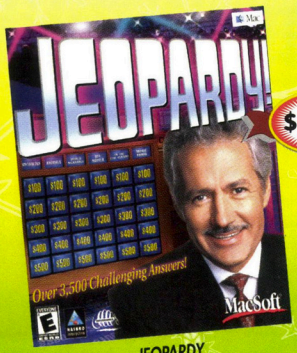

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T TEEN ESRB Animated Violence

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There's a New Sheriff in Town

It was a lawless town. After the old managing editor rode off into the sunset, *PC Gamer* was a place of tumbleweeds, liquor, and Main Street shootouts. Nary a deadline could be met; contempt for the processes of orderly magazine-craft was rampant.

Who could save the magazine from the dastardly rogues who now ran the roost without any regard for decency or propriety?

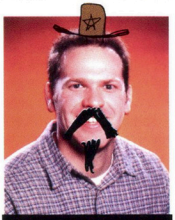
In desperation, the townsfolk called upon Corey Cohen, a fabled lawman from the east. Riding into town on his pale horse, Corey bellowed: "Hear this, you scoundrels and varmints! I am the law in these parts, and you *will* conform to the deadlines set down in our production schedule, or so help me god you will all suffer the eternal consequences."

The chaw-chewing desperadoes of *PC Gamer* were initially unimpressed. Li Kuo, the infamous Black-Hatted Bandito, stepped out from the murky depths of the poker room to snort condescendingly at the lawman.

"We don't take too kindly to yer managin' editin', law-dog," said Li. "Law just don't go around here."

Corey dismounted from his horse, rolled up one shirtsleeve, and lifted Li straight up off the dusty ground. He threw the Bandito like a rag doll, sending him through some wooden slats. After sliding across the bartop and knocking aside a bunch of bottles, Li came to a crashing halt atop the poker table.

The townsfolk rejoiced. They knew that a managing editor had appeared who would sort out all of *PC Gamer*'s impudence.



The new face of law and order in the *PC Gamer* office.

With a gleam on his tin badge and a polish on his boots, he stomped the rest of the scurrilous roughnecks into submission. By the end of the day, the town was back in proper order.

A little girl ran up to Corey and gratefully handed him a white daisy.

He accepted it with a wink, saying, "I was just doing my job, ma'am."

GAME OF THE MONTH

Each issue, we select a very special game as Game of the Month. It's a product of note, and it's definitely good, but it's also one that manages to impress in an unquantifiable way. This game is usually of Editors' Choice quality, but it doesn't have to be. For this issue, the winner is...

PC GAMER Game of the Month January 2001

C&C: RED ALERT 2

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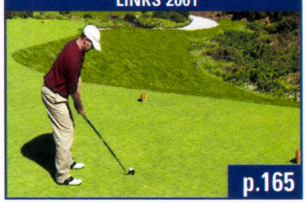
EDITORS' CHOICE

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

Every month, we honor the best games we see with our Editors' Choice award. It's not easy to earn, and there are a lot of excellent games that fall just short of the honor. So when you see the *PCG* Editors' Choice logo on a game at a local software shop, you can bet it's among the best.

LINKS 2001



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NEW AND IMPROVED RATING SYSTEM

Only the greatest games should be rewarded with our coveted Editors' Choice award, and this tweak to the rating system reflects that. Now, with a quick glance at the score box on each page, you can see where the game fits into the great gaming scheme of quality.

100%–90% EDITORS' CHOICE

We're battening down the hatches and limiting our coveted Editors' Choice Award to games that score a 90% or higher. It's not easy to get here, and darn near impossible to get near 100%. Games in this range come with our unqualified recommendation, an unreserved must-buy score.

89%–80% EXCELLENT

These are excellent games. Anything that scores in this range is well worth your purchase, and is likely a great example of its genre. This is also a scoring range where we might reward specialist/niche games that are real breakthroughs in their own way.

79%–70% GOOD

These are pretty good games that we'd recommend to fans of the particular genre, though it's a safe bet you can probably find better options out there.

69%–60% ABOVE AVERAGE

A reasonable, above-average game. It might be worth buying, but probably has a few significant flaws that limit its appeal.

59%–50% MERELY OKAY

Very ordinary games. They're not completely worthless, but there are likely numerous better places to spend your gaming dollar.

49%–40% TOLERABLE

Poor quality. Only a few slightly redeeming features keep it from falling into the abyss of the next category.

39%–0% DON'T BOTHER

Just terrible. And the lower you go, the more worthless you get. Avoid these titles like the plague, and don't say we didn't warn you!

HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS

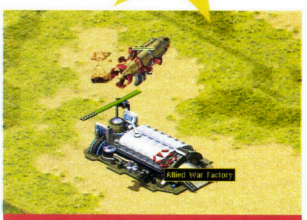
With each *PC Gamer* review in this issue, you'll find two very important pieces of information: the game's minimum hardware requirements and the hardware configurations we recommend as the *least* you'll need to really enjoy the game. While a game will run on the minimum system the manufacturer specifies, it might not run all that well. Because of this, we test each game on several systems so we can bring you a more realistic assessment of what you'll *really* need.

CATEGORY	Real-time strategy	**REQUIRED**	PII 266, 64MB RAM, 350MB HD, 8MB video memory
DEVELOPER	Westwood Studios	**WE RECOMMEND**	PII 450, 128MB RAM, 16MB video card, DSL or cable-modem
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts	**MAXIMUM PLAYERS**	8

Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2

Game of the Month PC GAMER January 2001

Westwood "supersizes" *Red Alert*, giving us more units and multiplayer modes — and the exact same gameplay.



The Kirov airship is slow and ponderous, but its bombs can wreak mighty destruction.

Dolphins can use a sonar attack to loosen the grip of a Soviet Giant Squid — or to sink enemy ships.

It's hard to believe, but it's been four years since *Red Alert* burst onto the gaming scene. The free world was hooked by its fast-paced gameplay, alternate-history premise, and free Internet matchmaking (offered at a time when several newly formed gaming services were charging gamers for the privilege of finding opponents). With *Red Alert 2*, the same gameplay is back — and that means the *same* gameplay. The result is a double-edged sword: fans who couldn't get enough of the original will be overjoyed, while those looking for significant improvements will probably be let down.

In a great opening gambit, the alternate historical events leading up to *RA2* are presented in wonderfully rendered video footage that runs during installation, filling in newcomers on Einstein's time-travel experiments to prevent the rise of Hitler (but which instead led to Soviet invasion of the West). You learn of a new Soviet premier, Alexei Romanov, who, after years of perfecting new weapons, has launched an invasion of the U.S., hitting America from every direction and almost totally crippling her military forces.

Just as in the first game, you can play as either a Russian or Allied commander in the single-player campaign mode, each consisting of a dozen missions. The campaigns begin with small-scale battles and mushroom to sprawling conflicts that can take an hour or more to complete.

Use the Weather Device to unleash clouds of death on your opponent. If you don't believe us, just check out the grinning skull near the middle of the screen!

You play from a traditional 2D isometric perspective that doesn't require a blazing video card for acceptable performance; but aside from highly detailed scenery such as the Statue of Liberty, the graphics aren't anything special. Units are easily identifiable, but there's some high weirdness going on in the perspective department: position an infantry unit by a skyscraper and it appears to be about two stories tall. It's something you can overlook, to be sure, but it does lend a cartoonish atmosphere to the action.

IT'S ALL IN THE BALANCE

Looks take a back seat to gameplay and unit balance in any self-respecting RTS, though, and here Westwood has done an excellent job. In a nutshell, the Allied units bank on superior technology, while the forces of the Russian Bear are based on one simple concept: brute force. Russians can crank out basic infantry units for half the cost of the Allied GI, but the GI can entrench to gain longer range and greater firepower (with com-

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mands accessed by handy quick-keys). The Commies' devastating nuclear missiles are countered by the Allies' Weather Control device, which darkens the skies and calls down lethal fingers of lightning on enemy buildings and units.

Red Alert 2 is exquisitely balanced. Both sides have mobile air-defense units, but the Allies are given Patriot missiles to counterbalance the incredibly powerful Kirov airship. Meanwhile, the Soviet Flak Trooper can bring down the Allied Rocketeer with a few blasts. The Allies' Prism Tower is a beefed-up version of the good ol' Tesla Coil, and in a quirky move perpetuating that cartoony feel, Westwood even added aquatic creatures to the unit list: Allied Dolphins can attack ships and shipyards, while the Soviets' Giant Squids can crush ships and strangle Navy SEALs.

It's a good lineup of units, and it's definitely one of the game's strong points, made even more appealing by the fact that units gain experience and become more powerful — and can even repair themselves. When you see how far an Allied Prism tank can fire once it's been promoted through the maximum three ranks, you'll realize how important this element can be.

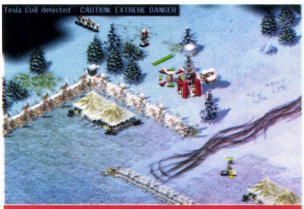
Playing as an Allied Commander in the campaign, you may be frustrated at first as you try to figure out how to defend against certain Soviet units like the Terror Drone — a mechanical spider that leaps inside any armored vehicle and eventually destroys it — and the Yuri, a psychic that can turn your own units against you (or even melt their brains!). But rest assured, there are measures you can take to even the battle: entrenched GIs can pick off those spiders at long range, and attack dogs aren't vulnerable to the mind-blowing power of the Yuri.

The same goes for Russian Commanders. Allied Chrono Legionnaires can teleport anywhere in your base and literally send buildings to oblivion, but they can't do it quickly enough to stop a bolt from a Tesla Coil. Enemy spies sent to steal money or technology will be sniffed out and killed by attack dogs. This balance even extends to the mining units that collect ore for production: the unarmed Allied Chrono Miner can be teleported instantly back to the refinery in an emergency, but the Soviet War Miner carries a powerful machine gun that can rip infantry and even armored vehicles to shreds.

All vehicles emerge from the same building, so unless you move the rally point or designate another building as the primary source of vehicles, you'll often wind up with huge bunches of vehicles parked together.

DIG IN AND BUILD FOR VICTORY

Unit and building construction is handled basically the same way as in the first *Red Alert*, with the emphasis on speed and simplicity through the interface's four tabbed groups. Fighting units emerge from a single War Factory regardless of how many you've built, for instance, so there's no need to keep an eye on individual buildings as you would in a game like *Warlords: Battlecry* or *WarCraft*. But you're robbed of the ability to set up multiple rally points (except by changing which building the units will come out of), causing units to pile up in a jumbled mess. Units can be queued in order, so you can crank out a sequence of units — miner, tank, IFV, miner — that ensures production stays high while you build a powerful war machine. Defensive structures and other buildings can't be queued, but it's not a problem since you have to go to the separate construction menu to deploy them.



Tanya's tough, but Tesla Coils will fry infantry fast. Take out the power to render them useless.

All this adds up to a game that will be immediately inviting for *Red Alert* vets. But some notable recent RTS innovations are missing, such as the lack of formations for grouped units, making it awfully tough to

AROUND THE OFFICE

CHUCK ***Red Alert 2*** **is a near-perfect follow-up to its predecessor. It's fast-moving, addictive, and simple to play, but has enough wildly differing units and weapons that you can play for months and not discover every winning strategy. I've even dreamed of playing *RA2* in my sleep. (Though, regrettably, a War Miner rush has yet to yield victory in the real world.)**

LI I'm not much of a real-time strategy fan, but *Red Alert 2* has got its little claws into me big-time: I've been leaving the office earlier to go home and finish my campaign. I've already gone through the Allied half of the game and am now playing as the Soviets. While the game's still in 2D, there's enough new stuff to make for a fresh and new experience. Also, you gotta appreciate Kari Wuhrer.

ROB Wow — *RA2* is pure fun! A long-lived fear of RTS games has evolved due to my extreme sucktitude when it comes to playing them (I finished dead last in the *PC Gamer* Olympics *AoE* game). But *RA2* is different. It's super-playable, and has a fun story, Kari Wuhrer in a tank top, violent weather storms, and attack dogs. What more could you want?

THE STARS OF *RED ALERT 2*

Regardless of what else you think of it, *Red Alert 2* never takes itself too seriously. It's all about kicks, and in the video clips preceding each mission the actors ham it up with everything from thick, phony accents to over-the-top "drammer." Here are a few of the folks you'll meet throughout the game's campaigns.

Lieutenant Zofia
ALEKSANDRA KANIAK

Zofia briefs you before and during Soviet missions, but that tight leather body suit makes it easy for your attention to wander! Kaniak's only movie appearance was in an erotic mystery flick.

Premier Romanov
NICHOLAS WORTH

This jovial Russian megalomaniac has a well-rounded hatred of all things American, especially mom's apple pie and baseball. He makes Kruschev seem like America's best friend.

General Vladimir
ADAM GREGOR

Despite popular belief, even those dirty Commies enjoy hot tubs, gorgeous women, and thrash metal. Be warned: Vladimir rubs you of credit for victories, but at least he isn't pure evil like...

Yuri
UDO KIER

...the Psychic Russian Weasel himself. Check out the groovy headpiece and way-cool tattoo! Kier's stock in trade is horror and sci-fi flicks, and his expertise really shines here.

President Dugan
RAY WISE

President Dugan stays pretty cool considering the Red Terror has spread across the entire U.S. at the start of the game. Interesting note: both Wise and Worth made their big-screen debut in *Swamp Thing*.

General Carville
BARRY CORBIN

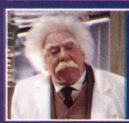
Good ol' boy Carville is a straight-shooter who finally finds himself waging the Russo-American war that he narrowly escaped in the 1983 flick *WarGames*. Check out those shiny pearl-handled pistols he's got.

Lieutenant Eva
ATHENA MASSEY

It must be a lot easier for women to climb the military ranks in the world of *Red Alert 2*. Eva is a real looker, but she's all business, even though Massey has more erotic thrillers to her credit than Kaniak.

Tanya
KARI WUHRER

Move over, Lara Croft — Tanya's in town and ready to rock 'n' roll! She's leery of your abilities when you first assume command, but when you achieve final victory she's ready to spend some quality time with you.



Al Einstein
LARRY GELMAN

Einstein's done pretty well for a high-school dropout turned patent clerk. In the world of *RA2* he's invented the Chronosphere, a Weather Control device, and chameleon tanks. Oh, and some theory about relativity.

arrange them to take advantage of terrain or buildings. Another shortcoming is the inability to set your units' fighting stance: you can have them guard an area or defend another vehicle or building, but you can't order them not to fire on enemies or only to return fire as they advance. Once you get a sniper into position near a building, you'll be perplexed to find that he can't be garrisoned in a building like normal infantry — even though that's usually the spot where snipers do the most damage.

Units invariably get bunched together in any RTS, but it's particularly maddening trying to pick the one guy you need from out of the crowd. As you repeatedly attempt to click on that Engineer amid all the Conscripts or GIs surrounding him, you'll soon be praying for an option to pause or at least slow down the game speed, but neither is available here. (Game speed is adjustable in multiplay, however.) You can work around this by using the "type select" hot key to choose all onscreen units of the chosen type and then moving them away from other units, but it's not nearly as smooth as the portrait-based unit selection offered in a game like *Warlords: Battlecry*.

None of these gripes cripple *Red Alert 2*, and once you've gotten used to the system you'll probably get severely caught up in the Campaign missions, especially when advanced technologies like the Yuri, Chronosphere, and Weather Control come online. Still, we've seen better ways of addressing some of these issues — and it makes you wonder why Westwood didn't.

DOMINATE ONLINE

This is also true of the game's multiplayer support, where a bounty of game modes and customization options are somewhat compromised by an interface that ignores several important aspects of online play.

You can sharpen your multiplayer skills in Skirmish mode, and the computer opponents are savage foes on even the medium difficulty setting — you can't help but wonder how they build such large, advanced bases so quickly. In fact, it'd be nice if the game had an option to turn off fog of war in Skirmish mode so you could pick up a few pointers from them, but you're not allowed to (unlike in *Warlords: Battlecry*).

Another thing you can't do in Skirmish mode is practice the different multiplayer modes. It isn't that big a deal when it comes to game types like Megawealth (you capture oil derricks with Engineers for resources and can't use Miners) or Land Rush (a totally revealed map is littered with power-up crates), but it's a different story with Unholy Alliance mode. This lets you build

From time to time you'll get special units normally found only in multiplay. In this Soviet campaign mission you get radiation-emitting Desolators.

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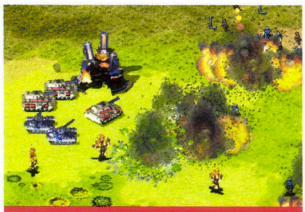
THE INCREDIBLE MORPHING MACHINE

Though it's not available for Skirmish games, one of the coolest multiplayer modes is the "Unholy Alliance," which gives you an Allied *and* a Soviet MCV at the start of the game. What makes this so special is a single unit: the Infantry Fighting Vehicle, or IFV. Place a single unit inside the IFV, and it gains new and sometimes amazing capabilities. Which units you'll be able to insert into an IFV will depend on which nationality you've chosen to play as.

- **GI, TANYA, CONSCRIPT, SPY**
  Mows down infantry at very fast rate
- **ENGINEER**
  Turns IFV into mobile repair vehicle
- **FLAK TROOPER**
  Kills infantry even faster than with a GI inside
- **TESLA TROOPER**
  Creates Tesla Tank; Trooper survives vehicle destruction
- **CRAZY IVAN, TERRORIST**
  Creates "suicide truck" that detonates on contact with units
- **CHRONO LEGIONNAIRE**
  Armored version of Chrono Legionnaire, but can't teleport itself
- **YURI**
  Melts the minds of infantry units over a wide radius
- **DESOLATOR**
  Armored version of Desolator's direct attack
- **SNIPER**
  Armored version of sniper

Allied Rocketeers look futuristic with their jet packs, but just a few blasts from a Soviet Flak Track brings 'em down to earth in a hurry.

You see many famous sights during the campaigns, like the memorial to the *USS Arizona* at Pearl Harbor.



This destruction was caused by the relatively cheap and quickly built Demolition Truck.

both Soviet and Allied units simultaneously, and learning how to best mix-and-match these takes time and patience, especially when it comes to putting infantry-type units in the morphing IFV (see sidebar).

Because IPX is the only network protocol supported, Internet play is limited to Westwood Online. The service offers several great features — Quick Match pits you against similarly ranked opponents, World Domination lets you fight for whole continents over the course of a day, and opponents can be easily added to your Buddy List — but it lacks a couple of basic features. Create a game, and you'll find you can't name it or even give it a description — players must join the "room" to see what they're getting.

Ping times aren't shown for chat lobbies or individual opponents (the manual mentions a colored bar indicating latency, but it doesn't seem to be there). The need for ping times is crucial, because playing out of your ping depth can be a nightmarish experience. Several times I surrendered simply to end the suffering. You could get around this annoyance if direct TCP/IP connections were available — you'd just ping your opponent's IP address — but that's not an option.

But here again, you'll probably overlook these headaches because the multiplay is still a full-bore blast. One-on-one Quick Matches are particularly intriguing, because you have no idea what side your opponent is assigned, forcing you to adjust your strategies and tactics on the fly. What's more, you can play as one of nine nations divided into Soviet and Allied forces: America, Great Britain, France, Germany, and the Republic of Korea compose the Allied selections, while Iraq, Russia, Libya, and Cuba form the Soviet choices. Each nation gets a special multiplayer force in addition to the standard Soviet or Allied units, and while there's a slight question of unit balance between them all — the Libyan Demolition truck is the cheapest, fastest nuclear blast you can get, while Great Britain's Sniper seems like a waste of time — there's usually some type of defense you can employ.

It's only natural to expect some new improvements when four years pass between two installments in a series, but it'd be a real stretch to say that a new story, new units, and various multiplayer modes qualify as groundbreaking features. *Red Alert 2* was obviously designed for fans with an insatiable appetite for more of the same, and with the realization that many were so accustomed to the original that it would be risky to introduce any significant design changes. For those, it looks like we'll have to wait for *Emperor: Battle for Dune*.

— Stephen Poole

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: New units; interesting campaign missions; numerous new multiplayer modes.

LOWS: Average graphics; lack of enhancements; uninformative multiplayer interface.

BOTTOM LINE: Westwood must have felt the *RA* engine didn't need improving — add 7% if you agree.

PC GAMER EXCELLENT 85%

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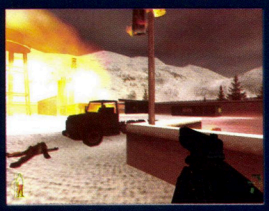

RATING PENDING RP Rating Pending ESRB

PC CD

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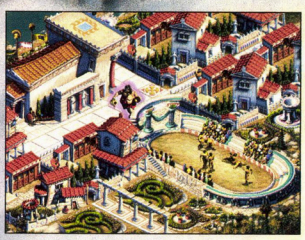

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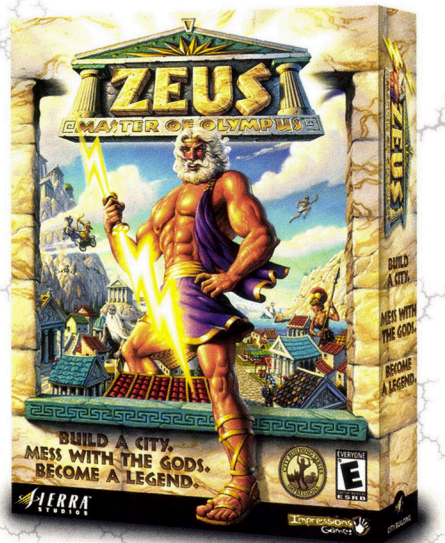

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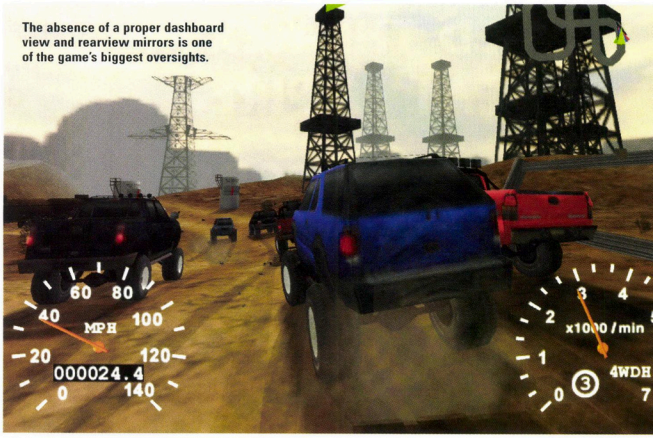
CATEGORY Racing	**REQUIRED** P200, 32MB RAM, 300MB HD, 4MB 3D card
DEVELOPER Terminal Reality	**WE RECOMMEND** PII 450, 64MB RAM, 16MB 3D card, steering wheel
PUBLISHER Gathering of Developers	**MAXIMUM PLAYERS** 8

4x4 Evolution

The idea of racing SUVs *is* kinda cool. But when we call this almost perfect, we stress the word *almost*.



The absence of a proper dashboard view and rearview mirrors is one of the game's biggest oversights.

They've been taking over our city streets and interstates for several years now, so it was inevitable that we'd wind up with a PC game featuring the ubiquitous Sports Utility Vehicle. Although very few of these pricey 4x4s are ever subjected to the sort of off-road abuse that the TV commercials would have you believe, the straightforward potential for such a four-wheel-drive frolic was more than enough for g.o.d. and Terminal Reality to crank out *4x4 Evolution* — a paean to the less-than-humble SUV.

Over 100 different models from eight licensed SUV manufacturers are represented in *4x4 Evo*, and while this number is more like 30 once you filter through the minor cosmetic differences, the stable of vehicles is still quite impressive.

What's more, the core Career mode lets you cash in your accumulated race winnings for tons of individual performance parts and upgrades, which can turn a garden-variety Chevy Blazer or Nissan Pathfinder into an off-roader's turbo-charged wet dream. Each of the trucks has been lovingly rendered right down to the independent suspension movement of each wheel, but one significant oversight is the lack of any proper in-car dashboard driving perspective (plus the complete absence of any rearview mirrors). There isn't even an arcade-style "look back" view to fall back on.

All of the SUVs are completely indestructible and will never exhibit even the most cursory damage or wear effects. When mixed with a physics model that makes it virtually impossible to flip any of these top-heavy vehicles onto their roofs, it's obvious that the participation of each of the eight featured manufacturers predicated a severe hit in the realism department. Also, if ever a game cried out for force-feedback enhancement, it's this one — but sadly, TRI chose not to implement any.

The developer's inventive course designs through 16 rendered tracks are clearly one of *4x4*'s major highlights. Checkpoint races form the basis for each competition, but the ability to seek out shortcuts between each gate adds a fun twist. This "drive anywhere" circuit design perfectly complements the game's off-road racing premise and represents a welcome change from the confining course designs in games like *Test Drive: Off Road*. Some well-executed weather effects and dynamic scenery bonuses (such as flocks of birds and moving freight trains) add icing to the cake. With full support for D3D, Glide, OpenGL, and software-rendered graphics, *4x4*'s visuals never disappoint.

***4x4 Evo*'s Time Attack mode lets you compete against a ghost-car image representing your best lap.**

One area where the game does fail to satisfy is with its less-than-stellar AI. The computer-controlled trucks are surprisingly easy to beat and rarely pose the sort of challenge that'll demand any major vehicle upgrades on your part. In fact, the whole mechanical tweaking process is made somewhat redundant given that the AI trucks will always match your upgrades part for part. Thankfully, the game does come with a superb multiplayer component (via GameSpy's Internet matchmaking service) that lets eight PC, Mac, and Dreamcast gamers hook up for seamless online competition.

Lovely to look at and an absolute pleasure to drive and tinker with, *4x4 Evolution* has some significant omissions that ultimately prevent it from gaining admission to that elite fraternity of leading-edge driving games. It makes the cut as a fine racer, though, especially for the off-road–inclined.

— Andy Mahood

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Lots of licensed SUVs; "drive anywhere" courses; detailed graphics; excellent Net support.

LOWS: No proper in-car driving view; pushover AI; indestructible vehicles; no force-feedback.

BOTTOM LINE: A few fouled spark plugs turn a potentially great off-road racer into a good one.

PC GAMER 78%
GOOD

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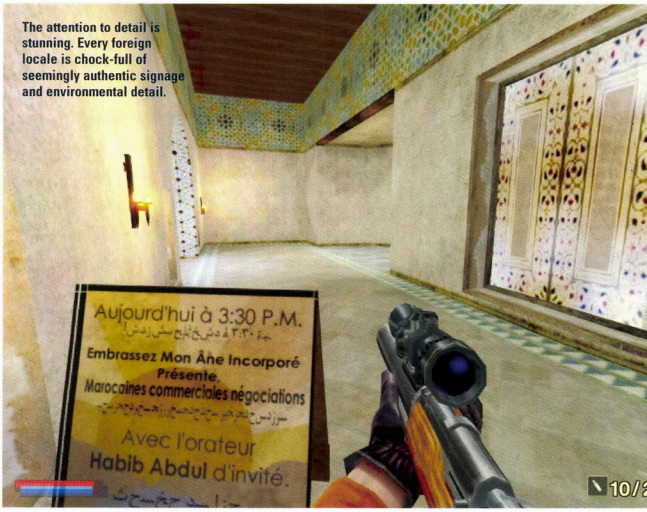
CATEGORY	Action	**REQUIRED**	PII 200, 64MB RAM, 460MB HD, 8MB 3D card
DEVELOPER	Monolith	**WE RECOMMEND**	PII 450, 128MB RAM, 32MB 3D card
PUBLISHER	FOX Interactive	**MAXIMUM PLAYERS**	16

No One Lives Forever

Hardly anybody does it better than Monolith does with this smart, cocky first-person spy thriller.

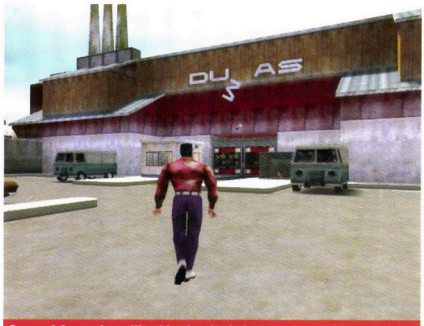


The attention to detail is stunning. Every foreign locale is chock-full of seemingly authentic signage and environmental detail.

At some point over the last couple of years, first-person shooters stopped having fun. I mean, they were still fun to play, but the developers seemed to shift away from the wide-eyed wonder of first-person action and delve instead into dark, somber, ultra-realist melodramas straight out of those awful gun-strapped paperbacks.

No One Lives Forever is a welcome change: a swiftly paced, engaging adventure that cleverly mixes up gameplay styles. The plot is just like a nutty early Bond flick, the atmosphere is one of over-the-top *Austin Powers* Sixties grandeur, and the action shifts constantly from mode to mode as if you were playing a different game with each new mission. It's a ton of fun — like an old episode of *Mission: Impossible* as re-imagined by John Woo. Err…

You play as Cate Archer, a predictably glamorous junior agent in the employ of UNITY, a secret international spy organization dedicated, hilariously, to stopping megalomaniacs. After UNITY's ranks are thinned by a vicious assassin, she's given access to a women's-lib playground: Santa's Workshop, the tools-'n'-toys bureau of UNITY in which field agents are outfitted with the very latest in wild weapons and secret gadgets. A super-agent at last, it's time for Cate to roar.



Some of the settings, like this chemical plant, are incredibly realistic.

The first mission takes you to Morocco, where you have to guard the life of an ambassador. Here we get the first of a wide variety of gameplay modes: it's essentially a sniper game in this first sequence, as you pick off assassins from a hotel window and thwart the ambushes waiting for the ambassador as he moves through the level.

This is where we first see how *No One Lives Forever* benefits from the realistic settings made possible by the LithTech 2.5 engine. The urban environment of Morocco — its city streets, the hotel, and the alleys interconnecting the map — are all rendered with exacting detail. The hotel lobby is filled with stuff — soda machines, potted plants, lounge chairs, throw rugs — all of which adds a weight of texture that's incredibly convincing. This same look and feel extends to the game's other locales, which include Berlin, the German Alps, and a tropical island hideaway.

Each mission wields some devilishly varied action. In the Morocco stage alone, you'll move from a sniper nest to a more traditional alley-crawl to a motorcycle ride out to the coast, and finally (after a sweet *Great Escape*-style fence jump) on foot to storm a compound. Before the game is over, you'll have escaped a crashing plane (a brilliant sequence — you jump and free-fall to catch up with an enemy, then steal *his* parachute just in time for a full-on firefight in descent), leaped from a bridge onto a passing barge, scuba-dived to search a sunken freight ship, taken photos of secret files with a sunglasses-camera, and eventually made your way off-planet as a stowaway aboard a shuttle bound for an evil genius' space station. That's all in one game, folks!

Cate's travels take her all over the world, including the frozen German Alps.

The value of all this variety can't be overstated. My biggest knock against almost *any*

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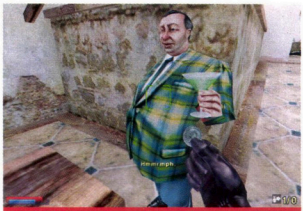


Sharp LithTech 2.5 graphics produce some of the best faces and character models of any FPS game.

Cars forming a tricky roadblock? Shoot their gas tanks and blow them sky-high.

PC game these days is that it suffers from monotony. *Soldier of Fortune*, for example, is a ton of fun for the first couple of hours — but as soon as its novelty violence wore off, I got thoroughly bored with it, and fast.

No One Lives Forever is aggressively new and different, mission by mission. You get an unbelievable amount of hardware to play around with, with each mission introducing new spy toys. The real-life weapons include a .38 revolver, an AK-47, an M79 grenade launcher, and even a Sportsman EX crossbow. Cate can stock up on dum-dum ammunition for increased destructive power, or phosphorous rounds when she needs to blast her way through total darkness. Sniper scopes, silencers, and laser targeting sights add to your killing power — and keep the shooter portion of the game from ever getting boring. And as far as gadgets go, there are some real doozies. Exploding lipstick grenades, anyone? Or how about a briefcase that conceals a built-in RPG? A perfume bottle that sprays acid? Let's just say the elves in Santa's Workshop produce lots of fun toys.

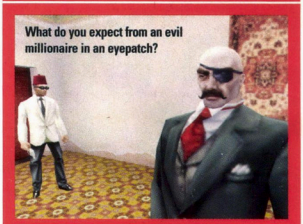
Another huge appeal of the game, which again rewards mission by mission, is the fact that you can use multiple approaches successfully to complete objectives. Perhaps even more so than in the wonderful *Deus Ex*, *No One Lives Forever* convincingly allows you to use stealth to solve a lot of missions. Rather than just letting you slip behind the backs of guards, you need to worry about security cameras, attack dogs, and other hurdles to quiet progress. Or, if you say bollocks to the whole "sneaky" approach, you can get there even faster by going in guns a'-blazing.

You won't be let down by the combat. The enemy AI is great: guards duck and cover, hide behind pillars, and scramble for their lives when caught out in the open. They react with far more plausibility than the bots in *Quake III* or *Unreal Tournament*.

After you solve the single-player campaign (about 25 hours of gameplay), you can explore the multiplayer modes. They're mainly variations on standard deathmatch and team battle, but *NOLF* offers one very cool team mode in which one side plays as UNITY, the other as H.A.R.M. (the uproarious name for the insidious, well-financed anarchist group that emerges as the villain of the single-player game). In the team mode, maps from the single-player game are reconfigured for new, multi-team mission objectives, and the teams engage in a frenetic *Spy vs. Spy* scenario to win the day.

We can drive it home with one headlight, unless Cate Archer can finish the job.

THE WORLD IS **MINE**



What do you expect from an evil millionaire in an eyepatch?

No One Lives Forever **is propelled by many transitional cinematic movies, which capture the wonderful campy style of '60s-era TV shows. Your enemies are megalomaniacal multimillionaires who are as dastardly as can be — eyepatch-wearing magnates and purring baronesses can all be counted on to ruin your day. The story is a hoot, the characters are voiced with mucho muscle, and Cate Archer herself represents very well throughout.**

The highest compliment I can pay *No One Lives Forever* is that it feels like I sampled five different games before reaching the end. And in an age where completing just *one* game can seem like a bit of a chore, this wildly varied adventure kept me hooked.

If there's any real flaw, it's that the whole mood of the game is wacky enough to maybe turn some people off. Supposedly "secret" documents are lying out on park benches for the world to see. Goons wander the streets as if they were crossing guards. H.A.R.M. agents include a bloated Scotsman named Magnus Armstrong and a bloated German barmaid named Inge (both replete with absurd accents). An air of silliness is pervasive. It wasn't enough to bother me much, and at times I really appreciated the antics. But compare them to moments when trusted allies get killed, and Cate is crying, and suddenly the mood is supposed to be intensely real. It's a bit of a muddle, and for a game that devotes so much time to story-advancing cinematics (see sidebar), the whole feel should have been more consistent.

But there's just no denying the fun factor of *NOLF*'s many action sequences. You'll find a lot of gaming goodness packed into this box.

— Daniel Morris

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Lots of action variety; great set-piece sequences; tons of toys; appealing atmosphere.

LOWS: Might be too self-consciously wacky for hardcore FPS fans.

BOTTOM LINE: A very fresh action romp with tons of cheekiness — maybe *too* much.

PC GAMER 84%
EXCELLENT

HALF COUNTER

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"The game looks extremely promising - and is definitely one to watch" Gamespot US
"…clearly one of the biggest surprises at the show (E3)…" Computer Games Magazine
"As the first science fiction entry into… the online RPG market, Anarc Online brings with it some new innovations, some new technology, a a Blade Runner-esque feel…" Next Generation, USA
RATING PENDING
RP
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Anarchy Online

the future in your hands

Imagine a world without borders, a society without rules. Are you a team player or an individualist? Do you toe to the company line, or do you carve out your own existence with the rebel clans?

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Remember to check out the Anarchy Online trailer on the Pc Gamer Cover CD

www.anarchy-online.com

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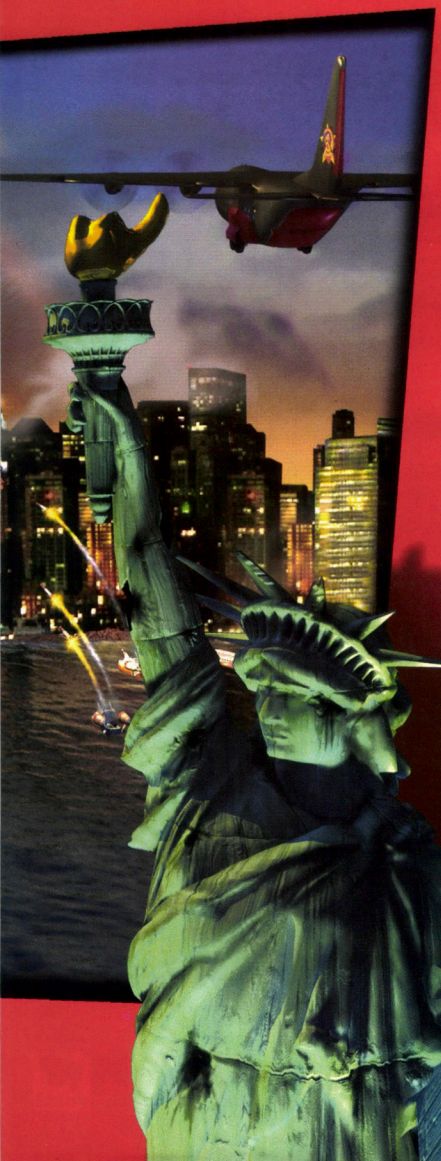
TEEN
ANIMATED VIOLENCE
For information on this product's rating, please call 1-800-771-3772

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

NEWS...



"9.3 out of 10"
"Go buy the game."
- IGN.com

"The most visceral, thrilling and heart-poundingly intense RTS experience ever seen on the PC."
- AVault.com

"One of the most enthralling and addictive RTS games we've played."
- CNET Gamecenter

"If you're looking for the hottest RTS this year, your ship has come in."
- Gamers Depot

"Westwoods finest game to date."
- PC Zone (UK)

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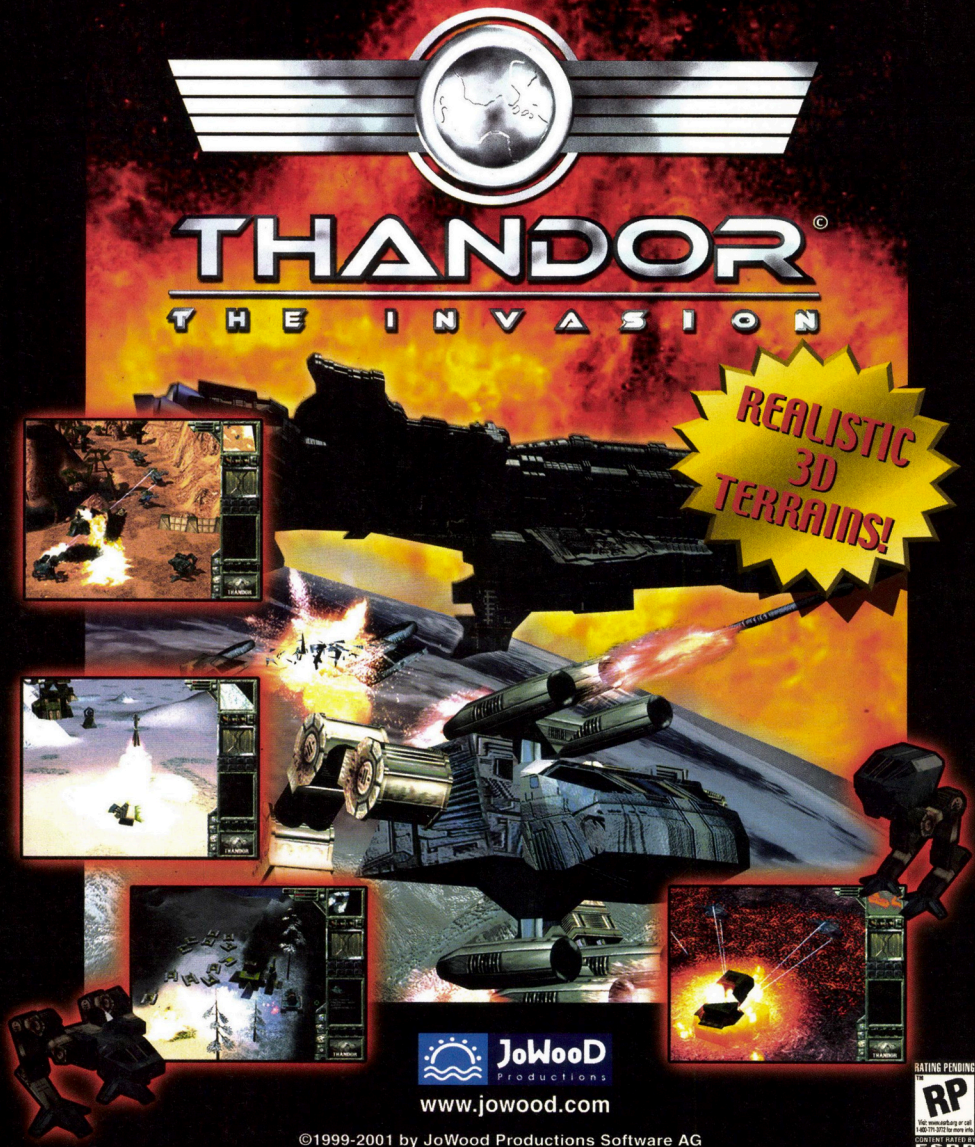

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CATEGORY	Simulation	**REQUIRED**	P266, 32MB RAM, 350MB HD
DEVELOPER	Microsoft	**WE RECOMMEND**	PII 500, 128MB RAM, 800MB HD, 32MB 3D card
PUBLISHER	Microsoft	**MAXIMUM PLAYERS**	32

Combat Flight Simulator II: WWII Pacific Theater

Microsoft gets a step closer to being the undisputed king of WWII flight sims, but it's not all the way there yet.

Two years ago, Microsoft's *Combat Flight Simulator: WWII European Theater* (*CFS*) — thanks to the branding power of the immensely popular *MS Flight Simulator* series — managed to outgun all of the competition at the register, despite its lack of personality and cutting-edge technology. Because of this game's success, none of the competition is around to put up a fight against the sequel. To its credit, however, Microsoft didn't let this open playing field stop it from improving on most of *CFS*'s shortcomings, and it's produced a better effort this time around with *CFS II: The Pacific Theater*.

WWII-sim junkies are afforded one of the most infamous matchups of WWII's skies: the U.S. F4-U Corsair (of *Black Sheep Squadron* fame) against the infamous Japanese Zero. Sim makers have ignored this conflict since the heyday of *Pacific Air War* and *Aces Over the Pacific*, and it's high time for another go. The other flyable aircraft are all single-seat fighters and include the P-38 Lightning, F4F Wildcat and F6F Hellcat, two Zero variants, and the Japanese "George." Conspicuously absent from this list are the U.S. P-39 and P-40, and any dive- or torpedo-bombers from either side of the conflict.

The focus is on mano-a-mano dogfights rather than the massive fleet attacks that actually occurred, which is a shame. Being able to attack a Japanese flat-top as the pilot or gunner in a Dauntless or sink the Yorktown in a Kate (à la *Pacific Air War*) would have been a blast. Still, you do get to fly in a massive campaign for both the Japanese and U.S. between 1941 and 1943, the most tumultuous period of the air war.

When you start the U.S. campaign, you're out-manned and outgunned by the Japanese, who enjoy superior planes and more experienced pilots. So things are tough early on, until you get better aircraft and recruits, and the tide turns. Playing as the Japanese, you'll find it easy going early on and then, suitably, extremely tough toward the end of the campaign, which accurately reflects history. Your success or failure in each mission plays a role in deciding which mission you fly next, and in the resolution of the campaign itself. (You also get an excellent manual rich in historical context, a robust mission editor, a variety of single historical missions, and basic multiplayer options over LAN and Internet.)

I'm no aeronautical engineer, but I think you need an engine to have a shot at beating a mission!

The art textures are four times bigger than those in *CFS*, which means the aircraft are much more detailed. You'll now see weathering effects such as stripped paint, exhaust stains, and streaks of gun smoke on the wings. The aircraft models now feature moving control surfaces, and even rotating wheels and moving shocks on the landing gear. And you get a full-3D virtual cockpit with working gauges — a huge improvement on *CFS*' butt-ugly "virtual cockpit," which I never used!

Microsoft has also done a fantastic job re-creating the Pacific setting, which features some of the most beautiful locales in the world. Flying toward a mission objective, you may be tempted to land your Corsair on one of the gorgeous beaches and search out a hammock, a tropical drink, and a nice island girl for company. Alas, that's not modeled in the game — I tried.

What you will find are some vastly improved damaged models. Your plane will reflect visible battle damage in both the exterior and cockpit views, in the form of bullet holes. And you'll witness enemy aircraft die a wide variety of

The next best thing to *Black Sheep Squadron* reruns on cable! Nailing a big, fast, and tough Corsair in a Zero is no small feat.

The virtual cockpits are now fully 3D with working gauges — a far cry from the atrocities in *CFS*!

detailed deaths — sometimes going up in a big ball of fire, or dropping pieces of fuselage in a slow spiral into the sea.

However, my favorite adjustment to *CFS II* is a much-needed injection of "personality" into the game's shell and campaign structure. Comic book–style narrated cinematics between missions help capture the flavor of the time, and provide a vibrant historical backdrop. Before each mission, you'll get to review your record plus the record of the seven other pilots in your "squadron," which consists of two flights of four pilots each. And you can reassign wingmen, pairing green pilots with more experienced pilots to try to keep everyone alive longer — and to hear squadron "scuttlebutt."

Your wingmen aren't terribly well-integrated into the missions. You can issue only incredibly basic commands to them in the air, of the Attack, Help, and Regroup variety. While this is better than the absence of commands in *CFS*, it still ain't good enough. The ability to tell a flight section to fly CAP (overhead protection) while you take a flight down to hit incoming torpedo bombers would have been welcome, as would the ability to tell a wounded wingman to take his battered plane home. Also, a "release drop tanks" command is clearly needed: AI pilots in *CFS II* seem to like entering dogfights with tanks still attached, which is suicide.

It can take forever for your squadmates to act on your orders; sometimes you'll just have to write your boys off as pretty darn useless. At the end of each campaign, my pilot had nearly 100 kills (air and ground) and no other pilot in my squadron had more than seven!

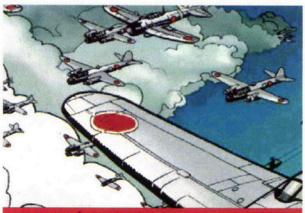
The incredibly obscure mission briefings and debriefings don't help either. On many missions, you're told that a certain number of enemy aircraft need to be destroyed, but it's unclear whether you or your whole squadron need to get that number. Flying a mission on Hard with full realism, I was told my victory conditions were the destruction of three enemy aircraft, plus my own safe return. Well, I shot down two Zeros myself and then nursed a very perforated Wildcat back to the carrier, and my flight shot down three Zeros without a loss. I failed the mission. Say what?

Similarly, 28 missions into the Japanese campaign, I was sent home in "disgrace" after a mission in which my flight shot down 10 American aircraft and suffered a single loss. I had lost "too many wingmen," it seems. (This from a nation that used Kamikazes?) No mention of attrition was made before this mission.

Still, a game can always have been better, right? *CFS II* does incorporate many new features that were AWOL in the original, and it offers some of the best dogfighting action of any WWII sim. The series still has a ways to go to reach the hallmark status of a game like *Pacific Air War*, which remained on my hard drive for years. But this sequel's a solid step in the right direction for Microsoft, and it's worthy of a simmer's investment.

— Steve Klett

Here I try (unsuccessfully) to play out that infamous landing scene from the Battle of Midway.



Comic book–style cinematics lend atmosphere and historical tension to the missions.

IL-2 Sturmovik

NOT DEAD YET

With Sierra axing *Desert Fighters* and pulling the plug on the sequel to *Aces Over the Pacific*, and the extremely painful demise of Looking Glass' *Combat Unlimited*, WWII flight-sim junkies like myself have had a lot to be depressed about during the last year or so. But there is hope. Hasbro's *B-17 Flying Fortress II* is looking mighty good and should be out when you read this. Blue Byte's working on a promising Eastern Front flight sim, *IL-2 Sturmovik*. And Empire is readying its *Battle of Britain* sim — the follow-up to *PC Gamer*'s Flight Sim of 1999, *MiG Alley*.

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Stellar visuals; highly configurable; detailed aircraft models and textures; intense dogfights.

LOWS: Dodgy AI; wingman management too basic; unclear mission objectives; no flyable bombers.

BOTTOM LINE: A solid improvement over the original, though still not up to the standards of prior classics.

PC GAMER 78%
GOOD

www.DailyRadar.com

THE X-PLANE GUIDE TO: AERO DYNAMICS

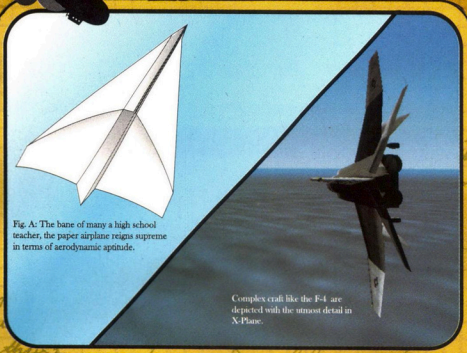
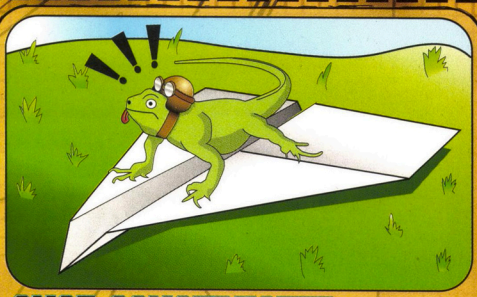


Fig. A: The bane of many a high school teacher, the paper airplane reigns supreme in terms of aerodynamic aptitude.

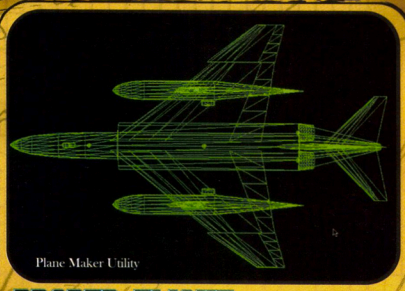
Complex craft like the F-4 are depicted with the utmost detail in X-Plane.

SIMPLE AERODYNAMICS are best explained through the use of such classic objects as the paper airplane (fig. A). Even in today's high tech flight sim market, only X-Plane can accurately depict this marvel of physics.

X-PLANE'S flawless aerodynamics model is the perfect constant to test the theory, "Can I launch a paper airplane 500 ft. from my office window."

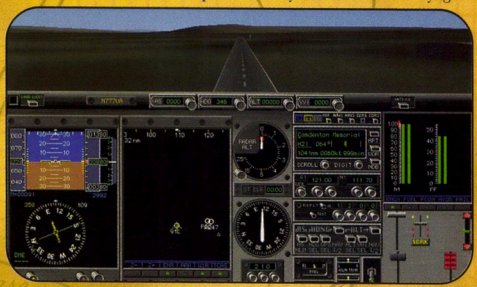


ONCE CONSTRUCTED, you must outfit your test craft with a pilot. While plastic army men are more suited to an aerial environment, a small garden lizard can be an excellent test pilot for your maiden voyage.



Plane Maker Utility

PROPER FLIGHT procedure requires preflight training, and X-Plane offers just the tools you'll need. Simply recreate your paper masterpiece using X-Plane's exclusive Plane Maker and test it out using actual scenery with real-time weather updates.



NOTE THAT WHILE sophisticated in it's own right, the lizard's natural interface is far surpassed by that of X-Plane, which sports ultra-realistic navigation and instrumentation.

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SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

TEEN T
Animated Blood & Gore
Animated Violence
Suggestive themes
ESRB

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CATEGORY	Action/adventure	REQUIRED	PII 300, 64MB RAM, 200MB HD
DEVELOPER	Human Head	WE RECOMMEND	PIII 450, 128MB RAM, 650MB HD, 32MB 3D card
PUBLISHER	Gathering of Developers	MAXIMUM PLAYERS	16

Rune

A long, monotonous Viking adventure game that ends up being far from the Valhalla of gaming.

Some rune powers, like this fire burst, are very effective against your foes.

The world's full of coming-of-age stories, most of them involving wayward adolescents or Disney-animated elephants and such. *Rune* is a Viking coming-of-age story. You're on a quest to avenge the death of your father, killed by an archenemy who worships an evil god. Your piety is directed to the benevolent Odin, who sporadically appears to encourage you in your trek deep into the bowels of the Earth. Your journey to manhood will take you through Hell and back again. And it's a long trip: figure on at least 20 hours before you see the end.

Length is *Rune*'s bane *and* its boon. Adventure gamers looking for a lot of thunder for their buck will get what they paid for: *Rune* boasts 15 absolutely massive maps, each of which leads linearly from point A to point B, and eventually to a very evil dude at the game's finish. But the game seems to take more pride in its length than in its depth. Hardcore action gamers will likely grow bored of the strictly melee combat and find themselves enduring long treks, lever-throwing puzzles, and jumping escapades to little reward.

This is not to dismiss the environments, which are rendered using a tweaked *Unreal Tournament* engine. They're vibrant and detailed, increasingly so as the game progresses. In fact, I noticed such a disparity in quality between the first couple of maps and the last few that I assumed I was watching the skills of the Human Head map editors grow right along with those of our Norse hero. There's just no comparison between the uninspired, lusterless caverns you trudge through before reaching Hell and the vivacious, mechanical Goblin village you find over halfway through the game.

Like most adventure games, *Rune* puts you on rails, giving you a set path you must follow. Whereas "rails" should connote roller-coaster — an exciting ride from start to finish — here it implies merry-go-round: the environments vary, but the action repeats monotonously. With the exception of one map filled with trampolines, you're left to walk, slash, and walk through more unoriginal levels.

As you hike on, playing from an over-the-shoulder perspective (though you can zoom into first-person mode for a closer view), you'll fight all your enemies with hand weapons. No missile weapons here: *Rune* breaks it down old-school with assorted swords, axes, and hammers. You get about five of each, and launch various attacks based on how you control your character. Step right, and you'll swing left. Step back, and you'll drop an overhead slam. You can also carry a shield, which you raise using a defend key. In fact, this is probably the best implementation of melee combat I've seen in ages.

Additionally, all the weapons contain a unique magical rune power. Some are defensive, like the vampire sword that sucks the life out of opponents, but most are offensive. One advanced hammer hurls boulders at your foes, while a particular sword creates lightning clouds that electrocute nearby adversaries.

The magic spells look great, and would be fun if only you felt at liberty to use them. Unfortunately, most require at least half of your rune power to summon, and last about 30 seconds. To replenish rune juice, you have to find hidden stones, which typically restore just a fraction of your capacity. Fear of what lies around the next corner keeps you from using rune power where it'd be perfectly effective.

A solid multiplayer option rounds out the game, which ships with seven deathmatch maps. Like *Unreal Tournament*, games are relatively lag-free over LAN and Internet.

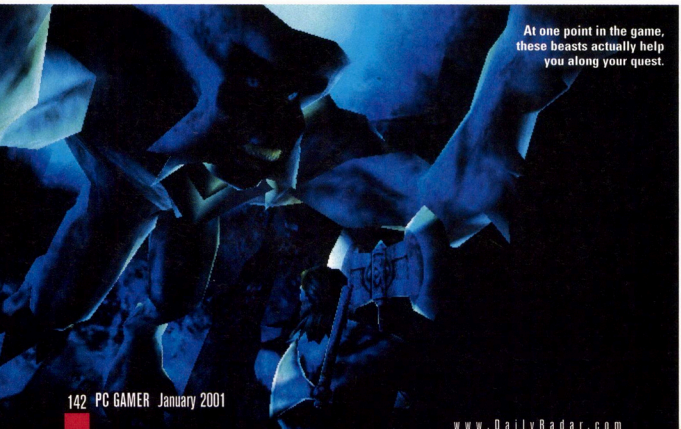
To the designers' credit, *Rune* wins the Saved Game Loading Speed award. My impatience has not been so well-appeased since the old days of *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*.

Yet, when the last bridge is crossed, *Rune*, like a derivative action film, will have wowed with special effects and spectacular sets, but left you feeling unfulfilled.

— Jeremy Williams

KILLER BUGS

Several people, including myself, have reported a door midway through the game that does not open. According to G.O.D., the 1.01 patch fixes this bug and several others. We highly recommended you grab this patch from *www.runegame.com* before playing.



At one point in the game, these beasts actually help you along your quest.

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Massive amounts of land to explore; great melee combat.

LOWS: Monotonous design; magic takes too long to recharge; minimal plot involvement.

BOTTOM LINE: Offers a lot of game time for your money, but not much stimulation.

PC GAMER 67%
ABOVE AVERAGE

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TEEN
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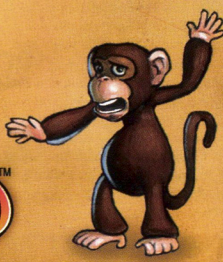

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CATEGORY	Action/adventure	**REQUIRED**	PII 300, 64MB RAM (96MB w/ 3D card), 850MB HD
DEVELOPER	Terminal Reality, Inc.	**WE RECOMMEND**	PIII 500, 128MB RAM, Voodoo III or GeForce 3D card
PUBLISHER	Gathering of Developers	**MAXIMUM PLAYERS**	None

The Blair Witch Project: Rustin Parr

Yep, low-budget horror flicks and PC gaming go hand-in-hand. Hope you packed your flashlight!

The little boy who lives here isn't too interested in talking to you: he's been emotionally scarred for life by that nasty old Blair Witch.

Love 'em or hate 'em, there's no denying the fact that the people behind *The Blair Witch Project* probably have a lot more money than you do. Packed with zero-budget faux documentary footage, the movie's minimalist approach, combined with unprecedented Internet buzz, sent audiences into an inexplicable frenzy. Happy to hitch themselves to the phenomenon, Gathering of Developers has released the first of three licensed *Blair Witch* games.

Fortunately, this particular chapter in the *Blair Witch* legacy does *not* feature whiny college co-eds or the shaky camerawork that made me upchuck a jumbo tub of popcorn. Instead, *Rustin Parr* takes place in Terminal Reality's *Nocturne* universe, and serves as a sequel to last year's semi-decent spookfest.

Rustin Parr takes place in the 1940s, and is presented from the perspective of *Nocturne* bit character "Doc" Holliday. The good doctor is an assertive women's-lib spokesmodel and avid combatant of the undead, serving under a black-ops government division called Spookhouse.

The game kicks off with a training sequence introducing you to the sinister world of Spookhouse, and runs you through the game's inventory, weapons, and combat systems. After battling through an absurdly difficult obstacle course — which only serves as a sign of things to come — you head off to Burkittsville to investigate the mass murder of local schoolchildren at the hands of hermit Rustin Parr.

When Stickmen Attack! Don't go into the woods alone, or else you might get jumped by Woody here.

Actual puzzles are few and far between — the game puts more emphasis on exploration and poking around, and most of the challenge comes from tracking people down and grilling them for information. Thankfully, the virtual Burkittsville is relatively large, and offers plenty of places to see and people to talk to.

While the combat controls are fine (be sure to use the keyboard/mouse combination), bizarre camera angles are the biggest hindrance. Most angles work well to show off the detailed environments and establish that deliciously spooky atmosphere, but they're absolute crap when it comes to helping you battle creatures *en masse*.

Some of the complaints regarding the original *Nocturne* have been addressed, including the motionless faces during exchanges of dialogue. Characters' mouths now move in a three-frame *Clutch Cargo* fashion, which I guess is better than nothing. Hey, at least the guys blink now. Also, the game runs a bit more smoothly than *Nocturne* thanks to smarter level-building.

I get the feeling *Rustin Parr* was produced on a relatively tight schedule to make ship date, and it seems the game was artificially lengthened by — oh, god — maze sequences. The amount of backtracking makes it feel like you're "living the movie," I suppose, but the time you're required to spend in the forest is an utter scam.

Nocturne's visual goodness remains intact, and the game uses drifting shadows and other visual cues to deliver some of the juiciest scares ever seen in gaming. *Rustin Parr* is a good deal creepier than *Nocturne*, simply because zombies and gargoyles and werewolves don't pop up at every corner and try to sell you insurance. As Hitchcock said, the scariest thing is always the thing you *don't* see.

Rustin Parr retails for 20 bucks — probably less by the time you read this — and as far as budget software goes, it kicks the living snot out of comparably priced fare such as *Wild Ocelot Hunter*. Even if the feature film didn't ring your bell, chances are good that *Rustin Parr* will dish out a few decent scares. Just remember to keep those lights turned off.

— Colin Williamson

FINAL VERDICT

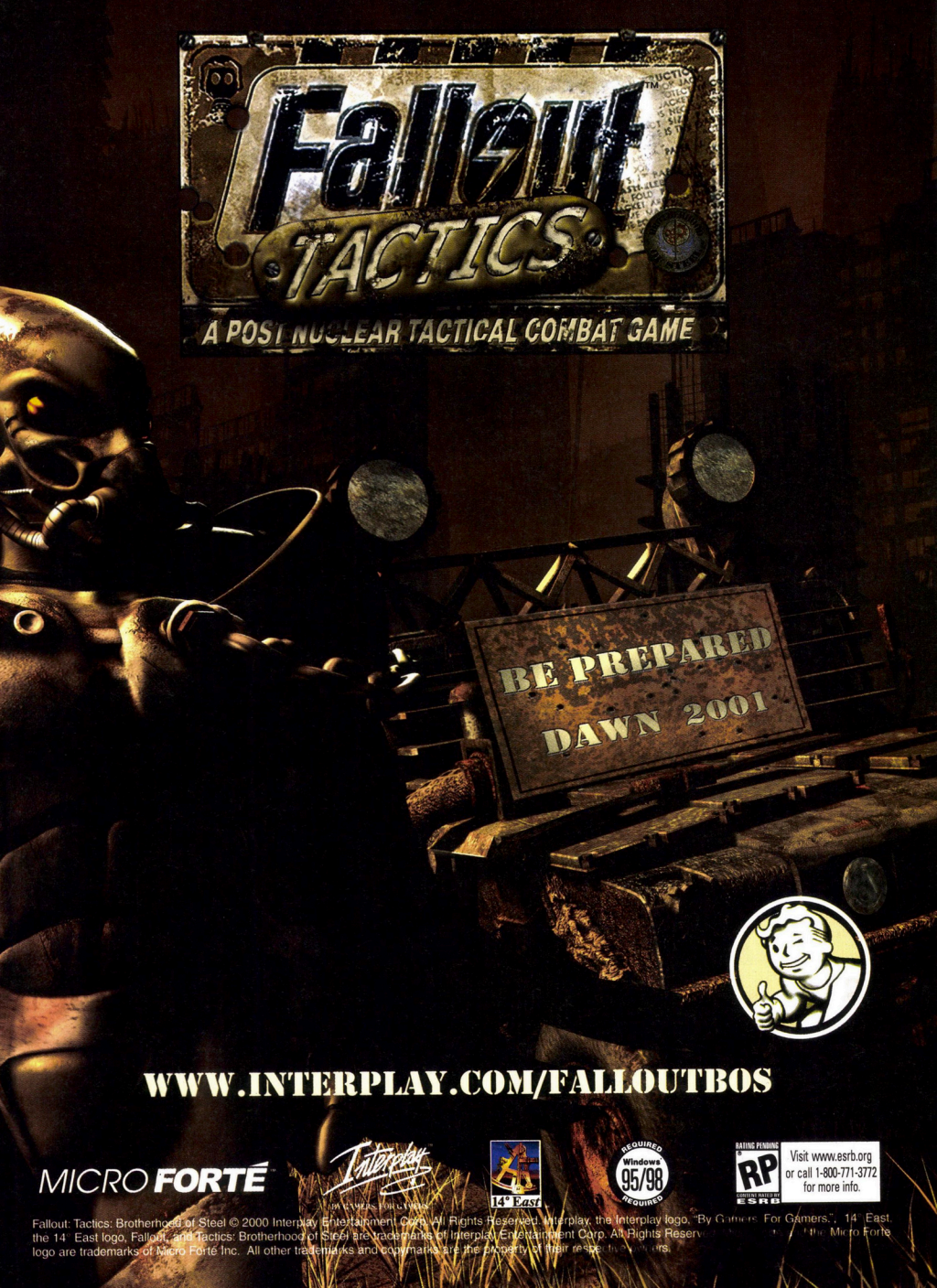
HIGHS: Awesome lighting and shadow rendering; some good scares; it's cheap.

LOWS: Lousy combat; you'll get lost (and have to backtrack) more times than you'll care to.

BOTTOM LINE: Not a bad way to spend 20 bucks — especially if you were big on the feature film.

PC GAMER GOOD 70%

www.DailyRadar.com



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CATEGORY	Strategy sim	**REQUIRED**	P166, 32MB RAM, 450MB HD
DEVELOPER	Impressions	**WE RECOMMEND**	PII 266, 64MB RAM, 650MB HD
PUBLISHER	Sierra	**MAXIMUM PLAYERS**	None

Zeus: Master of Olympus

The gods must be crazy — they keep flattening my cities! And I haven't even done anything wrong!

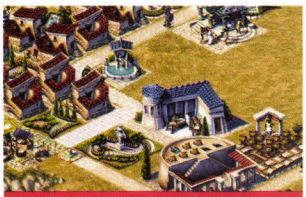
Combat looks bad and plays worse.

It just keeps coming back, again and again and again. *Caesar III* has morphed into more forms than the T-1000. In successive releases we've moved from Rome to Egypt, and covered a span of a thousand years. Now, with *Zeus*, we get to build our very own Greek city-state.

Despite claims to the contrary, Impressions no more offers Greek mythology in *Zeus* than it provided Egyptian history in Pharaoh. *Zeus*' buildings owe less to historical Greek architecture than they do to Tolkien, and its gods owe less to the beings once invoked in temple festivals than they do to Saturday-morning cartoons. This isn't a condemnation of the series — far from it. *Caesar III* and its siblings have supplied a taut simulation engine in a variety of colorful settings, micro-managed resources, and clever scenario design. I've been hooked for a couple of years now.

In *Zeus*, as in its predecessors, you're tasked with founding and maintaining cities. You place roads, houses, industries, markets, administrative quarters, and recreation centers. You also trade with your neighbors. Eventually, you build sanctuaries to favorably disposed gods, and summon heroes to your side by gathering expensive resources.

To its credit, *Zeus*' gameplay is less anal-retentive than that of its siblings. Fewer buildings have a negative impact on housing, and fewer structures are required to keep your citizens healthy. You can also add and remove structures while the screen is paused. In some scenarios, you build upon previous cities instead of starting afresh, because Impressions has organized the product as seven distinct, narrowly focused campaigns (five to eight scenarios each) instead of a single campaign stretching through the centuries.



The buildings look more like halfling villages than Greek communities.

The combat module, however, is as weak as ever. While it's true that you have three types of land units with three different battle modes (defense, attack, and special), battles are won and lost entirely by numbers. The units look ridiculous: it's not unusual to see them ignoring enemies or lying in a heap, legs flailing, like a box of panicked lead soldiers. Given all this, I don't know whether I'm annoyed at the automatic combat resolution in rival towns, or truly grateful that the feature exists.

By leaning heavily on mythological-monster threats instead of micro-managed city-building, *Zeus* raises some strong gameplay problems. A given city might be completely safe from a monster or nearly totaled, depending solely on its location on a map. Now, I don't mind my cities being trashed for mistakes I've made, but I take exception to losing a campaign because I randomly chose to build on the exact spot where the developers were secretly planning all along to allow *Diablo*'s brother to have a picnic. The fact that a monster shows up without prior notice after 10 or more hours of campaign gameplay doesn't improve my mood, either.

Zeus is too inclined to punish players heavily for random choices, and maintains too many rigid plot triggers that detonate regardless of your actions. At the same time, the game's less linear and easier to play than the rest of the series. I just wish it was less harsh: this series deserves a wider audience, but it's too easy to be frustrated by *Zeus*.

— *Barry Brenesal*

Trade, ally, and attack foreign cities. Go where no Ancient Greek has gone before.

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Less linear and more accessible than other series releases; well-integrated resource management.

LOWS: Unforgiving and too random; miserable combat system; diplomacy is negligible.

BOTTOM LINE: More ambitious than its predecessors, but ultimately less balanced.

PC GAMER 68%
ABOVE AVERAGE

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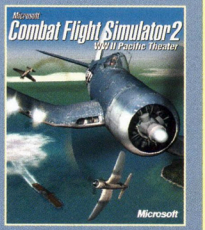

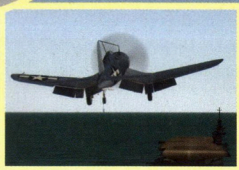

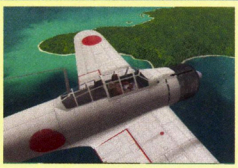

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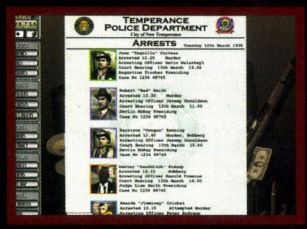
Real-time game play keeps up appearances by day while working bank vaults and brothels by night.



Command a host of new specialist characters to build your team's criminal power and experience.

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Gangsters 2 VENDETTA

It's Disturbingly Authentic

www.gangsters2.com

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CATEGORY	Platform	**REQUIRED**	P200, 32MB RAM, 70MB HD
DEVELOPER	Blitz Games	**WE RECOMMEND**	PII 300, 64MB RAM, 3D card
PUBLISHER	Hasbro Interactive	**MAXIMUM PLAYERS**	4

Frogger 2: Swampy's Revenge

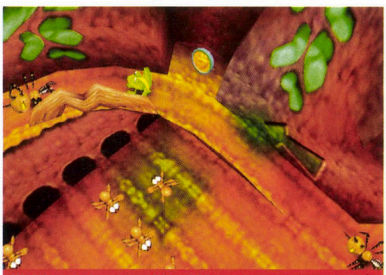
It ain't easy being green (and squash-able) — especially when this many things are trying to kill you.

Pucker up, big boy, but for god's sake — no tongues!

We may be PC gaming editors, but we've never forgotten the fun we had as kids back in the Old Neighborhood: the classic videogames receive plenty of homage in our office. Previews Editor Jeremy Williams can often be spotted in an Atari T-shirt (including a brilliant design with an Atari 2600 joystick and the single word "Roots"). *Atari Classics* received a lot of spins in our CD-ROM drives. And when *Frogger* appeared on PC a few years back, we prayed fervently that Hasbro would pay proper respect to the Sultan of Splat.

Well, the 3D *Frogger* update came and went, quite forgettably. Despite phenomenal sales, it garnered scorn from the hardcore-gamer clan. But remaining strong in the sales charts helped prove not so much that the new game was great, but that our nation's yearnings for that old-school innocent gameplay were strong. In this industry dominated by sales success stories, it should therefore come as no surprise that here cometh the mandatory sequel.

Thankfully, this particular sequel is more enjoyable by a mile. Kiss the sophomore jinx goodbye, because this is an instant contender for platformer of the year (though we're hard-pressed to come up with any competition of note). By refining and expanding upon the concept that fueled the original, this successor does its great granddaddy proud.



All right, who forgot to call the Orkin man?

Excellent level design is what elevates *Frogger 2* above the rest of the rehashes. Nostradamus would've gone bonkers trying to noodle out what to expect from each scenario. One moment you'll be dodging giant grindstones by standing in their grooves. The next second might entail a series of quick hops to avoid collapsing floors, a critter stampede, or lines of marching ants. In fact, the only constant is the need to rescue five babies kidnapped by that scaly peckerhead, Swampy the Crocodile.

Playing as the traditional hero or his lovely bride, Lillie, do-gooders become privy to a cornucopia of visual delights. The friendly frog's world is filled with brightly colored textures. What's more, no recently released product makes so exquisite a use of the third dimension: in judging jumps and figuring out approach routes, you'll be treated to an Escher-level design ethic that keeps you hopping happily. Only when the game switches to the various story-progressing cinematics will you have to deal with low-res, dare we say console-like, graphics.

Silly audio cues also add to the presentation's accessibility and fun factor. There's no speech, though characters squeak and grunt to humorous effect. Standard cartoon sound effects accompany Frogger's tongue flicks or baby-finding calls.

As engaging as *Frogger 2* is, however, there's only so many spins one can put on the same premise. Nevertheless, between a solid solo mode and four-player hotseat support, the target audience of casual gamers will get their money's worth.

I suppose the best thing we can say about *Frogger 2* is that it keeps the spirit of the Atari original alive, albeit in a totally different form and format. It resurrects that same gutsy amphibian pluck that's been dormant in us all since we first heard our hero go splat.

— Scott Steinberg

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Great level design; uses 3D to the fullest; damnably cute; cool multiplay.

LOWS: Eventually becomes repetitive, cutting down on its replayability.

BOTTOM LINE: An all-time favorite takes a forward step in its second life as a 3D series.

PC GAMER GOOD 75%

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CATEGORY Action	**REQUIRED** PII 266, 64MB RAM, 500MB HD
DEVELOPER Magic Lantern	**WE RECOMMEND** PIII 500, 128MB RAM, 1GB HD, 3D card
PUBLISHER Red Storm Entertainment	**MAXIMUM PLAYERS** 16

Rainbow Six: Covert Ops

Welcome to counter-terrorism class, with just a few field trips to test your mettle. Hope you survive.

Clearing out a grocery store can get hairy, thanks to all the aisles.

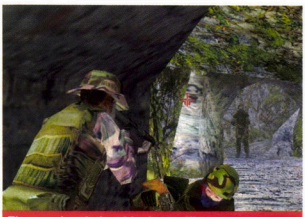
Let's just get one thing clear: *Covert Operations Essentials* is not an add-on. It's a stand-alone *Rainbow Six* product, containing nine new maps and a reference disc full of info on the world of counter-terrorist operations. So it's a perfect chance for those who don't own the original *Rainbow Six* to experience this seminal — if aging — tactical combat series.

Only three of the nine maps are presented as part of the mini-campaign. These three missions take place in a jungle, an Antarctic base, and a U.S. missile silo. Make no mistake: they are *not* for newbies. The jungle level is a little trickier than the others because the terrorists blend in almost perfectly with the foliage. It's a very tense map, and you'll be killed more than a few times without knowing what hit you, or from where. It'll take perfect planning and execution to complete all three of the campaign missions successfully.

The remaining six maps are playable in a custom game mode or in multiplayer modes, which is where *Covert Ops* really earns its commendations. The new environments, which include a shop interior and a hospital emergency room, are terrific for multiplayer match-ups. Lots of hallway doors and tight quarters really ratchet up the tension level.

However, these missions are only half of the package. The counter-terrorism encyclopedia is part of the fully functioning game: the idea behind *Covert Ops* is to have you pore over the generous helpings of resource material, take multiple-choice exams that test your knowledge of the material, and then use what you've learned in the new missions. Reading pages and pages of text and then taking an exam isn't normally considered fun, and we at *PC Gamer* would like to point out that we are game geeks, not nerds. Thus, we don't enjoy tests of any sort. Thankfully, you don't *need* to take the tests to get access to all the information, which is presented in a cool 3D globe divided by categories such as weaponry, vehicles, tactics, history, and more. Each article contains pictures, and some have FMV of gear being used, or interviews with weapons specialists or other counter-terrorism experts.

While some people may enjoy reading about the history of the GSG-9 or the SAS, most players will probably gloss over the data, watch a few video interviews (Tom Clancy is among the many interviewees), and eventually grow bored and boot up the new missions. Sure, it's pretty cool to watch clips of real .50 caliber rifles being fired, but there's nothing here that you can't see on The Discovery Channel.



The new jungle level looks terrific.

At $30, this isn't a terrible deal, but I would've liked some more meat. The *Rogue Spear* engine — which hasn't been noticeably improved — is definitely looking old, so we'll eagerly await a significant upgrade.

— *Li C. Kuo*

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Nine new missions; stand-alone product; loads of resource material.

LOWS: Only three real campaign missions; hellishly difficult; resource info only so-so.

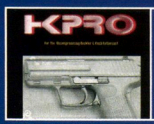
BOTTOM LINE: For the money, it's a worthwhile investment, but it could have used more missions.

PC GAMER 70%
GOOD

WANNA LEARN MORE?

There are plenty of places on the web to get info on all sorts of hardware used by counter-terrorist teams. Many of these pages have far more info than the *Covert Ops* reference disc provides. Here are two notable sites:

At *www.remtek.com/arms*, you'll find info on all of the latest and most advanced weaponry in the world.



Point your browser to *www.hkpro.com* to learn interesting things about Heckler&Koch, the makers of the MP5.

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PC CD ROM

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empire INTERACTIVE

CATEGORY	Real-time strategy	**REQUIRED**	P200, 32MB RAM, 150MB HD
DEVELOPER	Atomic Games	**WE RECOMMEND**	PII 300, 64MB RAM
PUBLISHER	Mattel Interactive/SSI	**MAXIMUM PLAYERS**	2

Close Combat: Invasion Normandy

Atomic Games goes back to where it started with the fifth installment in the *Close Combat* series.

No one ever said war was pretty. Two tanks demonstrate why infantry support wins the day.

The first *Close Combat* dropped us up close and personal in bloody Omaha Beach. Then the series put us in the shoes of the soldiers and commanders destined to go after "a bridge too far" in *Operation Market Garden*. Next came the brutal house-to-house fighting on the Eastern Front, and the freezing combat of the Battle of the Bulge. Now, *Invasion Normandy* gives us the chance to try to kick Hitler's ass out of Northern France.

Unfortunately, the potential of *Invasion Normandy* quickly becomes stale due to gameplay that has changed very little over the course of the series. As a result, I was struck with a nasty case of déjà vu almost as soon as I got my troops off the beaches.

Close Combat is a strategy game that attempts to model company-level WWII combat as realistically as possible, in real time and at the squad level. This means you won't be moving virtual chits from hex to hex; instead, you point and click up to 15 units of either German or Allied troops to victory on a series of battlefields measured in acres rather than miles. Victory is attained by capturing or holding "victory locations" on each of the detailed battlefield maps.

The series' hook is that it models the psychological factors of warfare to a degree that few games, turn-based or real-time, ever attempt. Under fire, your troops may disobey orders, high-tail it off the battlefield altogether, or be so inspired by your brilliant commands that they become miniature Arnolds and agree to take on Panzers by themselves.

Invasion Normandy brings some new flavor to the *Close Combat* recipe, but there's no real spice. The most notable addition is that each Battle Group can now draw units from a Force Pool, substituting a sniper for a howitzer team, for example. You can also replace units lost in battle and reinforce your Battle Groups as well (with the American side only — by this point in the war, the Germans weren't receiving any new replacements from home).

Air support is a great morale boost for pinned troops. True to history, only the Americans will enjoy this tool in the Grand Campaign.

Devastating naval bombardments have been added as support units, which also include air strikes and mortar barrages. Airborne units now start the game behind enemy lines with just five days of supplies, making it essential for you to link them up with a supply depot as soon as possible. And the battle maps have an array of new defensive features, such as dragon's teeth, barbed wire, and beach obstacles.

These are all interesting, and the 26-day Grand Campaign mode — in which you experience the ebb-and-flow effect of unstable front lines, and need to take and retake certain crucial grounds — deserves kudos. But it's still plagued by a dull and overly confusing interface, and even suspect line-of-sight rules: the computer often seems able to see you where it shouldn't be able to, and you often can't see his movements when it seems you should.

This latter problem in particular, and perhaps the general mothball feel of the series, could be resolved by a move to a 3D terrain engine. (Failing that, how 'bout at least a switch to the Pacific theater?) Until then, you may be better off giving the innovative *Combat Mission* a try if you're looking for a new take on WWII games.

— Steve Klett

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Success and failure in individual battles has broad impact; units behave realistically.

LOWS: Gameplay remains relatively unchanged; interface still confusing, line-of-sight still sketchy.

BOTTOM LINE: A solid game that feels like an add-on. This series needs a 3D overhaul.

PC GAMER GOOD 70%

CATEGORY	Action/adventure	**REQUIRED**	PII 333, 32MB RAM, 125MB HD
DEVELOPER	Gamesquad	**WE RECOMMEND**	64MB RAM, 200MB HD
PUBLISHER	Cryo/Take-Two	**MAXIMUM PLAYERS**	None

The Devil Inside

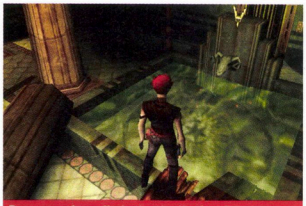
Forget about survival-horror spooks and scares. Think 3D, undead-killing *fun*, from the maker of *Alone in the Dark*.

Hitting the arms and legs helps, but torso shots do little good. Go for the head.

Level with me — were you *really* terrified by the supernatural antagonists in *Nocturne*, or did you just play it like a standard action game and laugh at the attempted horror? Let's face it: horror gaming is utterly silly, whatever the spin doctors may say, and it's needed a dose of good satire for some time. With *The Devil Inside*, that satire has finally arrived, and I couldn't be more pleased.

You play Dave Ackland, ex-cop and current paranormal investigator for a live-broadcast Hollywood show. On Halloween night, you go to investigate a haunted mansion while your cheesy host and his audience watch. As this is a first- and third-person shooter, you know exactly what will turn up, right? And how their chests, heads, and other assorted torso bits will fly off in little bloody explosions? Thought so.

The titular "Devil" is deliberately ambiguous. It could point to the demonic presence infesting the haunted house, or just as easily refer to Ackland's penchant for jumping into fountains and transforming into Deva, his demonic female alter-ego with heavy-duty psionic/energy powers. As Dave, you have strength, speed, and access to many weapons that require ammunition; as Deva, you refresh your many occult powers by killing the Undead.



Dave goes for a dip in the rippling pool...

...and turns into the demonic Deva.

The polygonal humanoid figures and flat hedge surfaces surrounding the mansion show the game's graphics at their worst, and Deva herself is a big disappointment. The best visuals are in the many incidental effects, like the rippling shadows in the mansion's fountains, and in the excellent animations, which include your main character's forward and backward rolls. The camera angles are very good, dynamically adjusting to follow your movements. (Camera positioning was a real problem in both *Nocturne* and *Martian Gothic*, which attempted a similar mixed-action/adventure-genre approach.) You can switch to the TV cameraman's chase view, complete with occasional video interference, or the spy-cam view. Neither of these alternatives is truly useful, but they do provide great atmosphere when you aren't busy slicing, sawing, shooting, or blasting zombie heads.

Devil Inside is easy to learn and play, with a gentle learning curve that leads from the most slow and stupid of zombies to vastly more powerful forms of hellish degeneracy. Each level makes interesting use of geographical or architectural features. I found a few curious programming anomalies — like a hillside I could run along for a while, only to find myself running backward after a certain point — but these moments seldom occur, and only around the peripheral scenery.

I enjoyed the outré humor, a combination of grossly insipid reality TV with the most nonsensical of plots. When the game-show host adds his nauseating comments, or a camera goes for a slow close-up of a disintegrating body, or audience members cheer on Dave/Deva after he/she switches forms, a whole series of ripe targets are being skewered. *Alone in the Dark* creator Hubert Chardot has a hit on his hands here, with as clever and outrageous a piece of shooting fun as you'd ever want to play, and a healthy dose of satire to boot.

— *Barry Brenesal*

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Excellent animations; intriguing dual characters; great camera angles; low learning curve.

LOWS: Poor polygonal figures and texturing; environmental bugs.

BOTTOM LINE: A compelling action shooter with plenty of options and challenges, plus a dry wit.

PC GAMER GOOD 79%

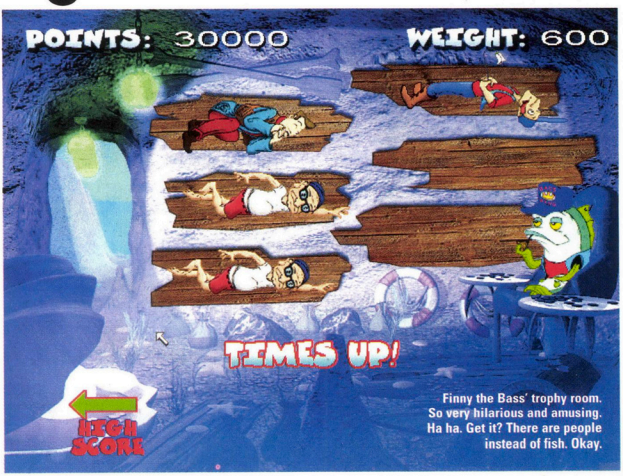
www.DailyRadar.com

PROTOSTORM.COM
<they're_out there. so_are we.>

CATEGORY	Drunken-game concept	**REQUIRED**	P133, 16MB RAM, 170MB HD
DEVELOPER	Hypnotix	**WE RECOMMEND**	A life.
PUBLISHER	Simon & Schuster	**MAXIMUM PLAYERS**	N/A

Bass Avenger

A review like this calls for a super-obvious fishing pun, but I honestly can't be bothered to make one.



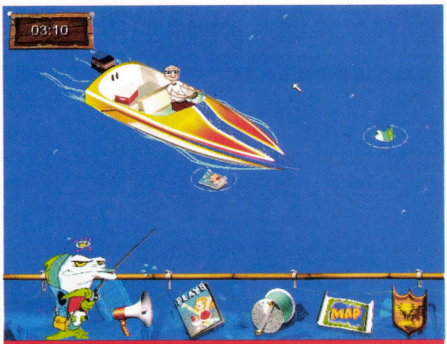
Finny the Bass' trophy room. So very hilarious and amusing. Ha ha. Get it? There are people instead of fish. Okay.

Maybe you're one of those fishin' types who still thinks Billy Bass is funny after hearing "Take Me to the River" for the hundredth time. If you've ever walked into a toy store or tackle shop and paid good money for that plastic singing bass, then *Bass Avenger* might be for you. But if you're of sound mind, this game is likely to inspire the same incredulity with which we stared at the recent election returns for Florida.

Okay, maybe I'm being a bit harsh on a $20 title. It could have some redeeming value as a drinking game: it requires no reading of instructions or even any basic hand-eye coordination. Plus, you really need to be a bit tipsy to laugh at the quips Finny the Bass expectorates as he swims about trying to catch fisherman with a variety of frat-house staples — six-packs of beer, jugs of moonshine, pizzas, brassieres, *Playboy*s, etc.

The roles are flip-flopped to ostensibly funny effect: you play as Finny the Bass and now you've got the fishing rod, as you try to lure overweight fishermen to an early demise. Gameplay is no more intricate than finding fishermen and tossing lures in front of them. Success in the reeling-in process seems totally arbitrary.

This is the second "hilarious parody" from the makers of *Deer Avenger*, and *Bass Avenger* is a perfect case of beating a dead horse, except it's probably less fun than actually beating a dead horse would be. *Deer Avenger*, which featured a deer bent on getting revenge against redneck hunters, was at least a bit entertaining, and more plausible. Hey, rent *When Animals Attack* and you'll probably see a few hunters getting the business end of a rack of antlers. I doubt you'll ever see Jimmy Huston getting attacked by a bass!



If trying to tempt a dirty ol' man into snaggin' a water-logged *Playboy* is your idea of fun, *Bass Avenger* is the answer to your prayers.

The two lakes you get to fish are apparently different only in that one is surrounded by snow and the other is set in summer. At each lake, you get the same ol' cast of characters to try to snag, the same extremely limited punchlines delivered over and over again by Finny — doing his best Billy Crystal imitation — and the same lame animations endlessly repeated.

Making this all the more dismaying is the fact that I'm an avid fisherman, a devoted fan of several fishing sims on the PC, and allegedly the target audience of this niche gag gift. News flash: this shit ain't funny — not even to the target audience. Simon & Schuster Interactive has found itself a comfortable niche marketing dreck games to non-gamers who are willing to plunk down money on the basis of a guffaw at the store shelf. But these titles won't interest even "casual" gamers.

So go rent *When Animals Attack*. Or go find an actual, literal dead horse to beat on. But steer clear of *Bass Avenger*.

— Steve Klett

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: It's cheap; buying the game keeps Cletus the Slack-Jawed Programmer in spaghetti.

LOWS: It's not cheap enough; not even enough comedy value to warrant an "irony purchase."

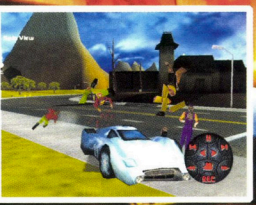
BOTTOM LINE: Please, no *Duck Avenger*! I'm not sure the world can sustain the damage.

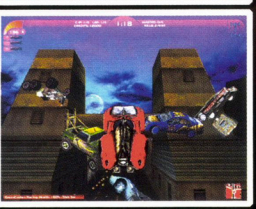
PC GAMER DON'T BOTHER 9%

www.DailyRadar.com

Kill, Maim, and BLOW STUFF UP.

(and race too.)





ALL THE MAYHEM, CHAOS, AND CARNAGE IS BACK WITH CARMAGEDDON TDR 2000. WITH A BRAND NEW 3D ENGINE THAT DELIVERS STUNNING VISUALS WITH DYNAMIC PHYSICS AND DEFORMING MESH TECHNOLOGY, YOU CAN PULP ALL THE ZOMBIES, MUTANTS, AND LAWYERS YOU CAN SET YOUR SIGHTS ON. THE ALL NEW CAMPAIGN MODE LETS YOU TRAVERSE OVER 30 LEVELS BY CRUSHING CARS, MAKING ROAD KILL, OR RACING TO THE FINISH. HOWEVER YOU PLAY, BUCKLE UP, CALL THE CORONER, AND PUT ON YOUR CLEAN UNDERWEAR; IT'S GONNA BE A WILD RIDE.

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

XICAT INTERACTIVE

PC CD ROM

SCi

CARMAGEDDON TDR 2000

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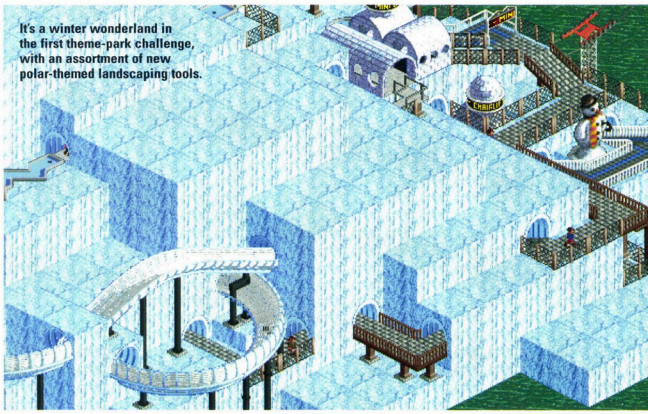
CATEGORY Simulation	**REQUIRED** *Roller Coaster Tycoon*, P90, 16MB RAM, 140MB HD
DEVELOPER MicroProse	**WE RECOMMEND** 32MB RAM
PUBLISHER MicroProse	**MAXIMUM PLAYERS** None

Roller Coaster Tycoon: Loopy Landscapes

Coaster fans: Just say "No!" to boring landscapes. It's time to make them, er, loopy! [Groan]



It's a winter wonderland in the first theme-park challenge, with an assortment of new polar-themed landscaping tools.

When I first reviewed Chris Sawyer's *Roller Coaster Tycoon*, I flinched at the amateurish graphics. And to be honest, I still do. But I gradually warmed to the game's considerable depth (where else can you find figures detailing the turn velocity on specific coaster rides?) and varied, scenario-based challenges. I liked, too, the ability to customize your own coaster down to minute details — hence the game's title. My wife eventually had to disengage me from the product with an iron crowbar. Long walks and therapy helped. Now, here comes the second add-on, *Loopy Landscapes*, to throw me for even more loops.

For those who are yet uninitiated, *Roller Coaster Tycoon* is one of many real-time simulation products that have appeared over the last several years, joining *Railroad Tycoon*, *Airport Tycoon*, and others. It's also proven to be the most popular. You're cast in the role of an amusement-park owner in charge of building and researching new rides, landscaping, and stands. You hire several kinds of workers, set ticket prices for individual rides, and offer various giveaways in marketing campaigns.

Loopy Landscapes brings a few minor modifications to the mix, though they're mostly cosmetic: new musical themes associated with various rides, some new themed landscapes (polar, fantasy world), and a few new entertainer costumes, such as Roman soldiers. *(Caesar, we who are about to be puked upon by little kids exiting a water slide salute you!)* It also offers a couple of new rides, rollercoaster templates, and park shops.

Razor Rocks requires 10 exciting rollercoasters — while giving you space limitations and low funds.

But what really distinguishes this package from the hordes of slim add-ons are the 30 new scenarios. As in the original game, you can't advance to later scenarios until you complete the first five, which assume more than casual familiarity with game mechanics. Each of the 30 presents strong challenges to the amusement-park veteran; even the first scenario, Iceberg Islands, is tricky, with its five small icebergs and multitude of elevation difficulties. If you haven't bought *Corkscrew Follies*, the previous expansion pack offering 30 further scenarios, there's extra cause for rejoicing, since it's included with *Loopy Landscapes*.

I do have some discordant jeers along with all the cheers, though. I would have liked the ability to remove small increments when you make an error building a coaster, and the ability to increase the speed at which the screen moves when you drag the mouse to one side. Creating underground paths remains a chore that practically requires a degree in engineering, and handymen still can't fix broken lampposts, which means you have to zoom in and deal with each one yourself. That brings us to the continuing lack of a sandbox mode: a large, open space without goals, for players to build and tweak in any way they wish. It's been one of the most requested features since *Roller Coaster Tycoon* first appeared, and its continuing absence remains a mystery.

But I'm not one to look a gift ride in the mouth. *Loopy Landscapes* adds good value to the original package, and is a must for rollercoaster mavens.

— Barry Brenesal

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Lots of design options; good research tree; 30 new scenarios; includes *Corkscrew Follies* add-on.

LOWS: Amateurish graphics; locked scenarios; still no sandbox mode.

BOTTOM LINE: More scenarios for fans of the breakout theme-park sim.

PC GAMER GOOD 74%

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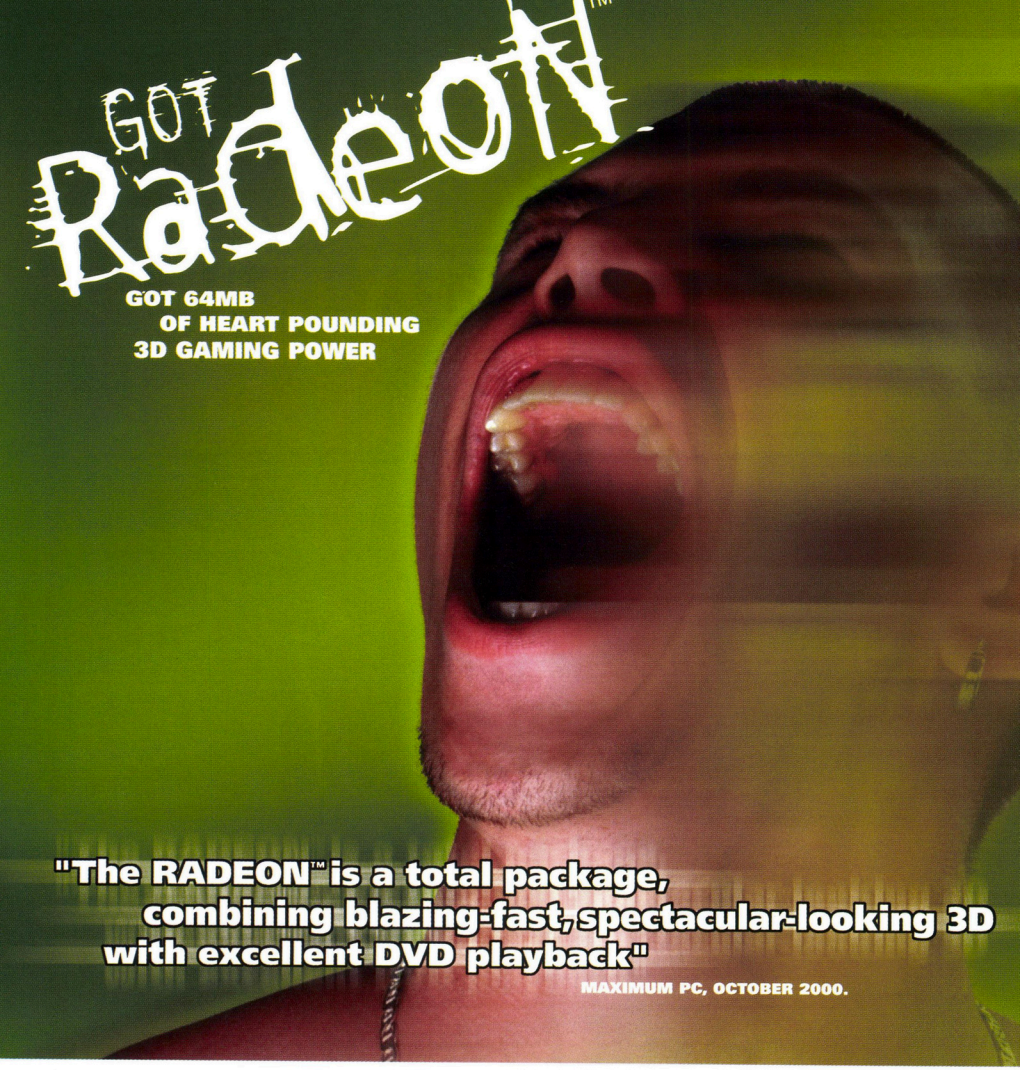

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CATEGORY Sports	**REQUIRED** PII 300, 64MB RAM, 230MB HD
DEVELOPER Microsoft	**WE RECOMMEND** PII 400, 128MB RAM, 1GB HD, 3D card
PUBLISHER Microsoft	**MAXIMUM PLAYERS** 4

Links 2001

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

The former champion is back to defend the crown, proving that classic gameplay never gets old.

The digitized golfers are greatly improved over those in previous *Links* games.

It seems like you can never have two or more of the same type of game co-existing peacefully. Fans of game A insist that theirs is better, and that fans of game B are delusional. Game B fans are just as sure that the A boys are ingesting some form of hallucinogen. Then, of course, there's the niche group that likes game C. They're so confident of their game's superiority that they won't even bother getting into an argument with the Neanderthals who could possibly get any enjoyment from games A or B. In other words, welcome to the Internet newsgroups.

I open the review this way because I want to make it clear that this kind of thinking is ludicrous. With the coming of *Links 2001*, we now have a triumvirate of golf games (the other two being Sierra's *PGA Championship 2000* and Activision's *Jack Nicklaus Golden Bear Challenge*) that all deserve top rankings, even though each might have more appeal to a certain group than the others. No one is head-and-shoulders above the other two; they just have a different approach in certain areas.

The *Links* series has always excelled at portraying the most realistic ball physics of any golf game. While the competition has made great strides in recent years, *Links 2001* ups the ante once again. From the flight path of the drive to the roll of the ball on the green, no other game pulls off the look and feel of hitting a real golf ball nearly as well as this game does. On the classic links of St. Andrews — modeled in this series for the first time — those bumps and rolls make all the difference to the game experience.

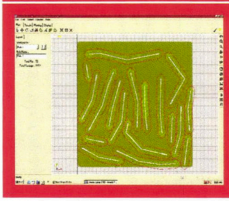
Graphics are another area where *Links 2001* has made great strides. Now that the series supports 3D acceleration, the pixelated bushes and tree limbs of the past are no more. Screen redraws, even on a fairly modest PII 400, are almost instantaneous at a resolution of 1024 x 768 — even with a couple of alternate view windows open. With a little more computing power, 1600 x 1200 is easily manageable — and absolutely gorgeous.

Now we come to the sticking point: the swing interface. This is where the battle line is drawn between supporters of the games. I happen to like *PGA's* True Swing a lot: I think it does a great job of mimicking the golf swing in real time and requires you to develop a real feel for the game. But you know what? I like *Links'* traditional clicking method, too. No, it doesn't have anything *physically* in common with swinging a club, but I think it beautifully represents the thought process that goes into every swing: good timing is required, as is a good feel about how far each club will hit the ball based on how hard you swing. Club selection becomes of utmost importance when your distance is between clubs. *Links'* mouse-based club meter, Powerswing, makes a return, and though I'm sure there are many fans of this method, I'm not one of them. To each his own, though — and that's the point I'm trying to make.

Now that *Links 2001* comes with a course architect (see sidebar), the three top games all have the most important bases covered, including excellent online play. If you held a gun to my head and made me choose one of them for enjoyment on a desert island, I'd have to go with *Links 2001*. But if you were to choose either of the other two, you wouldn't get an argument from me. It's a great time to be a computer golf fan, so stop the arguing and enjoy the games.

— *Rob Smolka*

IF YOU BUILD IT... I WILL COME!



I am inept. I have no talent whatsoever when it comes to building golf courses, regardless of which game's it is. Sure, I can create a mean hole layout (check out that screenshot!), but that's about it. Fortunately, many of you fine readers aren't as pitiful as I am, and according to some of the experts, *Links 2001*'s course architect is one of the most powerful ever made available to the public. So get out there and start building your dream course, your home course, or a re-creation of a famous course, and get it online fast. I need your help: I don't want to be stuck playing the same six courses that come with the game for the rest of my life!

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Unmatched ball physics; superb new graphics engine; course designer; classic gameplay.

LOWS: Not everyone likes the swing meter choices; computer players take forever.

BOTTOM LINE: Any one of the "Big Three" is a good choice. I'll choose this one, thank you.

PC GAMER EDITOR'S CHOICE **91%**

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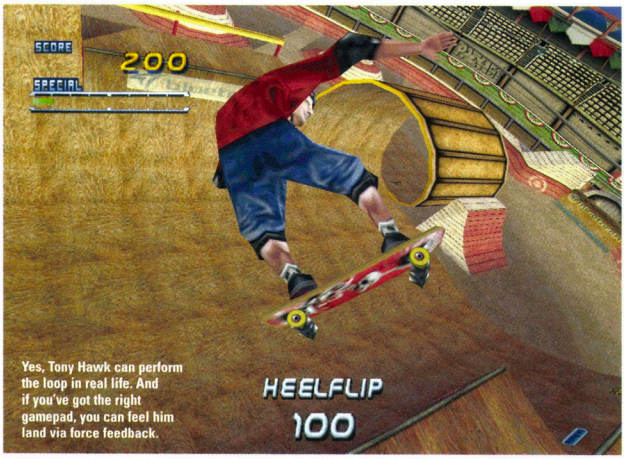
CATEGORY	Action	**REQUIRED**	P200, 32MB RAM, 350MB HD
DEVELOPER	Gray Matter	**WE RECOMMEND**	PII 400, 64MB RAM, 650MB HD, 3D card
PUBLISHER	Activision	**MAXIMUM PLAYERS**	2

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2

Proof positive that anything a console system can do, a PC can do better. And still keep the fun.



Yes, Tony Hawk can perform the loop in real life. And if you've got the right gamepad, you can feel him land via force feedback.

You know how the best driving games evoke a sensation of impossible speed — a sensation you retell as though it actually happened? After hours of playing *Quake*, have you ever closed your eyes and seen the map you were on as though it really exists?

Just as those games provide the thrill of "being there," *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2* gives you the feeling of *actually* skateboarding.

Bogus, you say? It's true, but it takes twitch-tuned fingers, a sense of finesse, and a little love for the console ethic. And since this is a PlayStation game at heart, you'll want to appease it by plugging in the nearest gamepad to switch your dynamic PC into $99 platform mode.

The controls may be awkward at first (you *release* the button to jump), but as soon as you land your first 720 Benihana, you'll be hooked. Directing the skater becomes a matter of instinct. Every object in the world is stunt fodder. Slide down (or up) railings and park benches, fly in and out of half-pipes at will, and plant jumps off of moving vehicles. The more stunts you pull in succession, the more points you score. The more points you score, the more money you get. Money unlocks maps. Easy.

Each of the eight intricate maps has several challenges that earn you dough, though you don't have to nail all of them to progress. In addition to point milestones, you'll bust all the recess bells in the school, ride New York subway rails, and launch a helicopter in the hanger. The game also offers several secret areas that you unlock by pulling audacious stunts you probably won't even consider until after a few treks around the map. And for those unfamiliar with the original PSX *Tony Hawk*, the designers were good enough to include a few of the classic maps as bonuses for progressing through the game.

If you fall from extreme heights, you have to slide on an object on the ground to avoid bailing.

Unfortunately, as is the case with almost every console port in history, the graphics suffer from having begun life on the PC's illegitimate-child platform. The characters and textures look to be directly ported from the television set, where they're at home in low resolution. PC gamers are going to be a little put off by the bleached-out colors and low polygon counts. But *Tony Hawk* was never a game heralded for technology over gameplay.

The sounds, on the other hand, are stellar. Each surface your skateboard rolls or grinds over is perfectly sampled. Rail screeches, wooden thumps, and concrete rumbles feed the illusion of a kinetic, even dangerous, world. This sensory input mixed with the silence of hangtime creates a terrific rhythm.

The star-studded soundtrack contains cuts from Public Enemy, Rage Against The Machine, and Naughty by Nature, among 12 other quintessential skate maestros.

Once you beat the game with one character, you can choose from 12 more personas, each with exclusive tricks, or you can opt to create your own skater. Of course, in true console style, you unlock hidden characters as you plow through the possibilities. If you get bored with the tracks, there's a nifty park editor with which you can design your own deathtrap to share with friends online.

While you're at it, you can try multiplayer matches over LAN or Internet. Modes include Tag, Horse, Trick Attack, and Graffiti, wherein you acquire areas of each map by painting them with your color. Unfortunately, lag is an issue even on a LAN, and there's no support for split-screen mode.

This game is a great experience on any platform, and none have more options than the PC. If you're looking for a new sensation, and a unique single-player arcade experience, bring home the Hawk.

— Jeremy Williams

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Excellent control; ingenious maps; truckloads of replayability features.

LOWS: Low-resolution graphics ported from consoleland; laggy multiplay.

BOTTOM LINE: Great for anyone with good reflexes and an appreciation for air-sailing stunts.

PC GAMER EXCELLENT 83%

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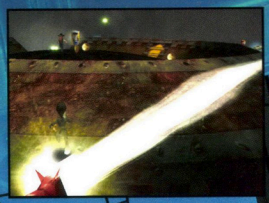

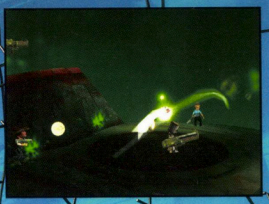

SCAPE

and Team Knockout) - WORLDWIDE RANKING - SINGLE-PLAYER ARCADE MODE
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HARDSTUFF

JANUARY 2001

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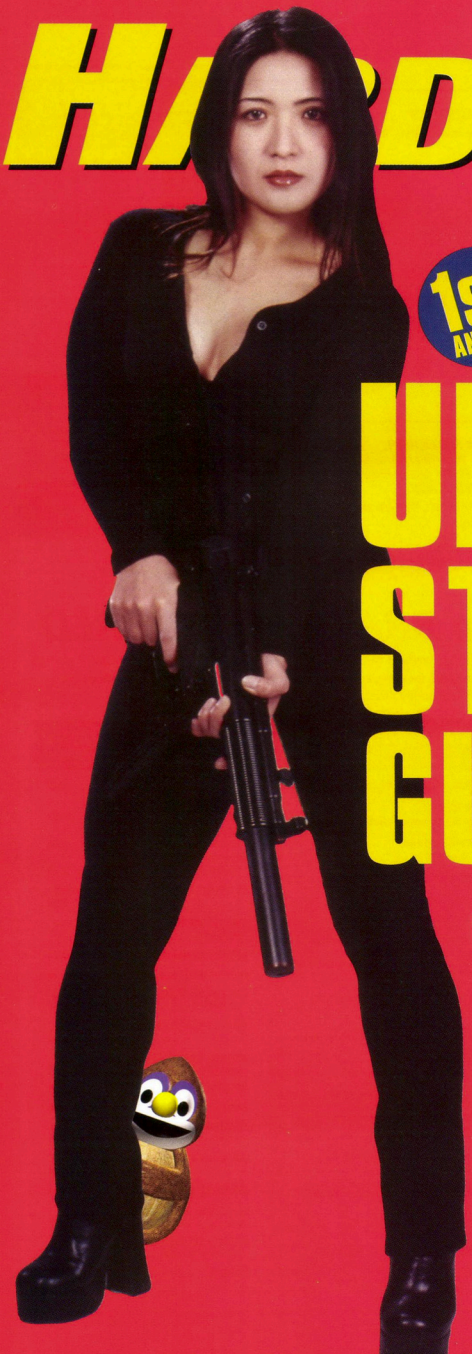


1st ANNUAL

Coconut Monkey's

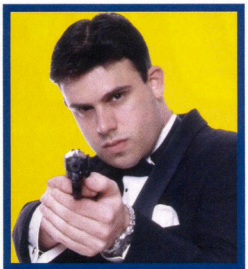
ULTIMATE STRATEGY GUIDE 2001

1.7 million cheats, four codes, and 13 tips for the first .08 nail-biting seconds of Coconut Monkey's masterpiece,

GRAVY TRADER

[See page 221 for details!]

HSCONTENTS



THE VEDE

Uniting the gaming community, one poor kid at a time.

Some individuals reading these words will likely call for my immediate resignation even before hearing me out completely, but I feel it's my duty to report to you that along with 500,000 others, I now own a U.S. PlayStation2. Not only that, I even waited in line for 18 hours at Sony's PlayStation store in downtown San Francisco to ensure myself a system. Why, you ask? The devil's work, you say? Perhaps, but I have a very good reason for doing what I did. That's right: by taking the first painful step on my own, I've brought all gamers one step closer to unity.

From this day forward there shall be no more hate, no more saliva-soaked spit wads launched at gamers who prefer consoles to PCs. For years, PC gamers have taken pleasure in laughing at and chiding any dumb kid "crazy" enough to own a gaming console. But when we really take a step back to examine the situation, are these kids really as "crazy" as we once believed? No. They're just poor. And we all know that making fun of poor kids isn't funny. Instead of poking fun, we should strive to empathize with the poor and buy, not only the world's most expensive PCs — enabling us to play the very best games money can buy — but also every "hot" new console so we can make those less fortunate than ourselves feel like they haven't settled for crap on a stick. Yes, it's a bitter pill we Internet millionaires will have to swallow in the name of peace, but I think it's worth it. Who's with me?

Greg Vederman, Senior Associate Editor

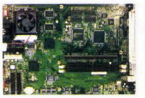
HSREVIEWS

ALIENWARE AREA 51 ..... PAGE 176
Come and see what Intel's new Pentium 4 has in store for you!

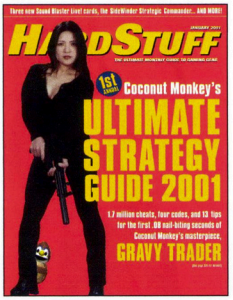
MICROSOFT STRATEGIC COMMANDER
..... PAGE 179
Microsoft is putting all the power in the palm of your hand. Can you handle it?

CREATIVE LABS SOUND BLASTER LIVE! LINEUP ..... PAGE 184
All your favorite Live! cards are back and better than ever!

HSTECHQ&A



FOR A ZILLION DOLLARS, CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT OS IS REQUIRED TO RUN USB PERIPHERALS? OF COURSE YOU CAN! . ..... PAGE 190
One of my readers still can't, though, and it makes your Dear Greg want to cry.



How We Rate the Hard Stuff

You've been around long enough to know the greatest technology doesn't mean a thing unless it improves the games you love to play. Our reviews focus on real-world testing, but when a number is in order for comparisons, we use the benchmarking tools developed by our hardware-frenzied sister publication *Maximum PC*. Between our testing and the benchmarks, you'll get the straight story.

HSTRINITY

Welcome to a BRAVE NEW WORLD

So you want to build a new PC, huh? As you may know, it can be a tricky affair. Luckily, Hard Stuff editor Greg Vederman is here to help you select the best parts for the job. The prices listed below reflect the lowest prices we could find as we went to press (obtained almost entirely from *www.pricewatch.com*).

ENTRY-LEVEL SYSTEM
PRICE: ROUGHLY $999

- CASE: 300-watt ATX form factor $100
- PROCESSOR: Intel Celeron 700MHz FCGA $79
- MOTHERBOARD: Gigabyte GA-6VX7-4X $83
- MEMORY: 128MB PC-133 SDRAM $79
- CD-ROM/DVD-ROM: Hi-Val 6x Pioneer DVD-ROM drive w/software DVD decoding $99
- FLOPPY DRIVE: Samsung 3.5" 1.44MB $8
- HARD DRIVE: 20.0 IBM Deskstar 40GV $97
- SOUND CARD: Creative Labs SBLive! Value $36
- MODEM: 3COM #2976 56K v.90 Hardware Modem $60
- MONITOR: 17" Optiquest Q71 ..... $170
- VIDEO CARD: GeForce2 MX $100
- JOYSTICK: Logitech WingMan Digital ... $17
- GAMEPAD: Microsoft SideWinder Gamepad $23
- SPEAKERS: Labtech LCS-2414 ..... $35
- KEYBOARD: Addtronics $15
- USB MOUSE: Logitech or Microsoft $39

TOTAL $1,040

MID-RANGE SYSTEM
PRICE: ROUGHLY $1,800

- CASE: 300-watt ATX form factor $100
- PROCESSOR: AMD Thunderbird 900MHz $163
- MOTHERBOARD: Asus K7V $130
- MEMORY: 256MB PC-133 SDRAM $99
- CD-ROM/DVD-ROM: Creative Labs Encore 8x with Dxr3 ..... $200
- FLOPPY DRIVE: Samsung 3.5" 1.44MB $8
- HARD DRIVE: 30.0GB IBM Deskstar 40GV $130
- SOUND CARD: Creative Labs SBLive! MP3+ $69
- MODEM: 3COM #2976 56K v.90 Hardware Modem $60
- MONITOR: 19" Optiquest Q95 ..... $299
- VIDEO CARD: 32MB GeForce2 GTS $200
- JOYSTICK: Microsoft SideWinder Precision Pro $53
- GAMEPAD: Microsoft SideWinder Gamepad $23
- SPEAKERS: Cambridge SoundWorks FPS 1000 ..... $70
- KEYBOARD: Addtronics $15
- USB MOUSE: Logitech or Microsoft $39

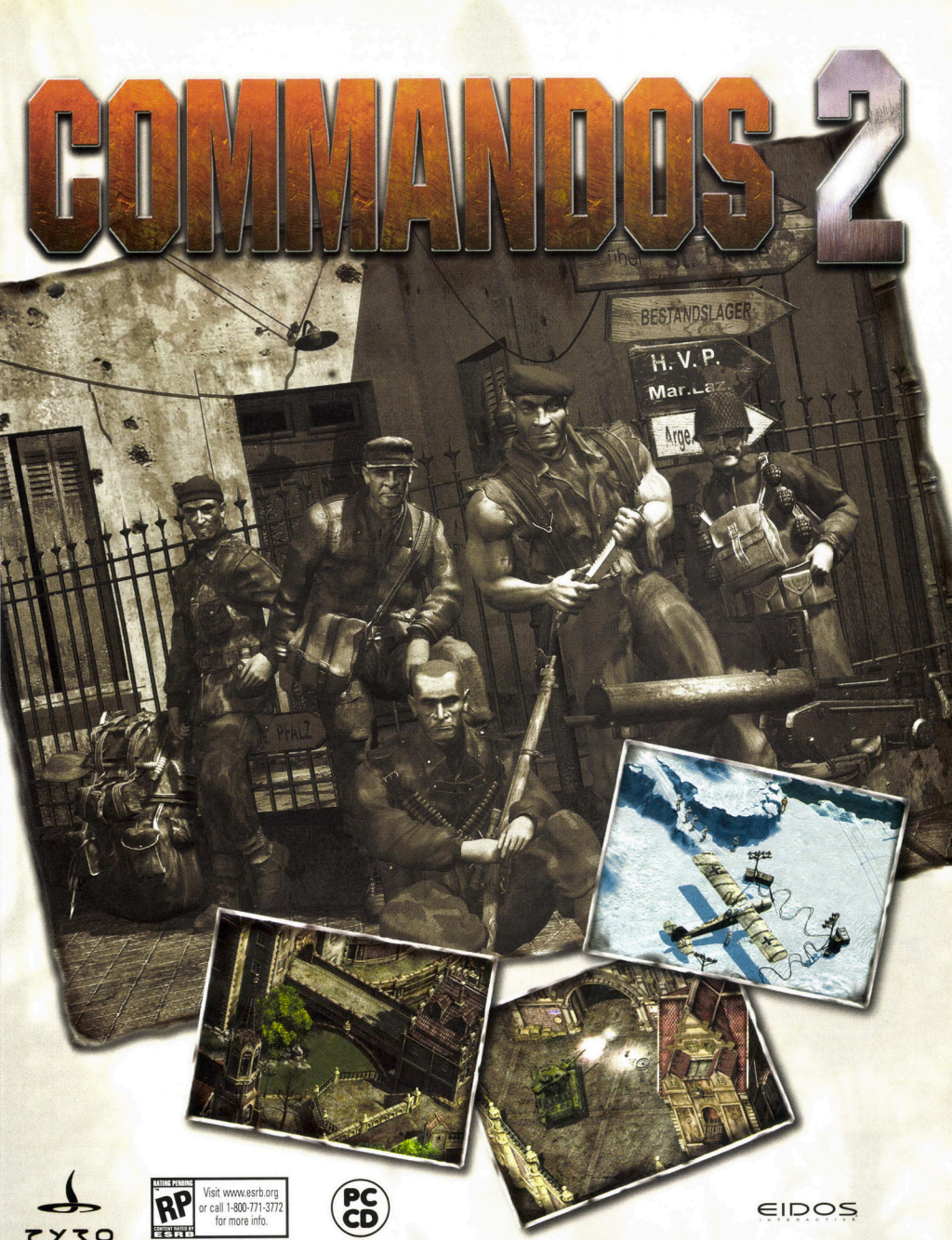
TOTALS $1,658

DREAM SYSTEM
PRICE: $3,000 AND ABOVE

- CASE: 300-watt ATX form factor $100
- PROCESSOR: Intel PIV 1.5GHz $1121
- MOTHERBOARD: Intel 850-based chipset $250
- MEMORY: 256MB PC800 RDRAM $380
- CD-ROM/DVD-ROM: Pioneer 16x DVD-ROM $259
- DVD DECODER: RealMagic Hollywood Plus PCI card $50
- BURNER Plextor 12x10x32x CD-RW $226
- FLOPPY DRIVE: Samsung 3.5" 1.44MB $8
- HARD DRIVE: 81.9GB DiamondMax Proxima 98196H8 ..... $310
- SOUND CARD: Creative Labs SBLive! MP3+ $69
- MODEM: 3COM #2976 56K v.90 hardware modem $60
- MONITOR: 19" Optiquest Q95 ..... $299
- VIDEO CARD: NVIDIA GeForce2 Ultra . $499
- JOYSTICK: Saitek X36 Flight Control System (USB) $96
- GAMEPAD: Microsoft SideWinder Gamepad $23
- SPEAKERS: Klipsch ProMedia v.2-400 . $249
- KEYBOARD: Microsoft Natural Keyboard Pro $75
- USB MOUSE: Original IntelliMouse with IntelliEye technology $55

TOTALS $3,970

www.DailyRadar.com



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PC CD

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PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

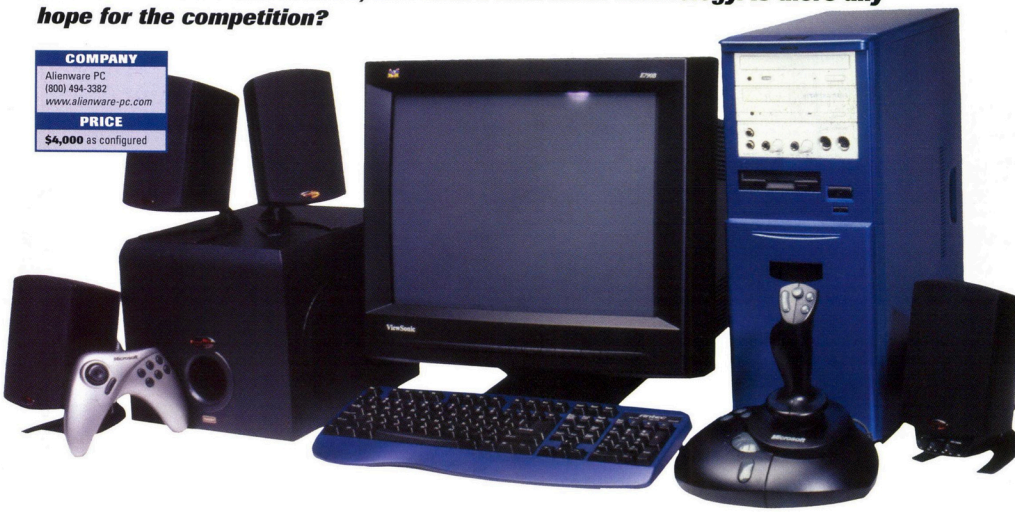
■ ALIENWARE PC

Alienware Area 51

Intel's Pentium 4 has arrived, and mixed with Alien technology. Is there any hope for the competition?

COMPANY
Alienware PC
(800) 494-3382
www.alienware-pc.com

PRICE
$4,000 as configured



While this may have slipped under your radar if you haven't been paying attention, most Januarys bring to Hard Stuff a new review of the hottest Alienware computer money can buy. Last year, the bleeding edge was a 700MHz AMD Athlon with 256MB SDRAM and a GeForce 256. The year before it was a 450MHz Pentium II with 128MB SDRAM and a RIVA TNT with dual Voodoo2 chasers. And just for comedy value, the year before that (1998), the system that everyone was dying to own was powered by a 300MHz Pentium II with 64MB SDRAM, a Matrox Millennium II, and all the storage anyone could ever want: a whopping 6.4GB. This year, Alienware has upped the ante as we've come to expect, bringing us our first Pentium 4–powered machine, clocked at an astonishing 1.5GHz.

What is this mythical beast known as the Pentium 4? At the most basic level, it's the product most likely to get Intel back in gamers' good graces. In case you hadn't noticed, prior to this system, we hadn't been sent an Intel-based computer for review in well over a year — AMD has gone a long way toward closing the gap between itself and Intel in recent times. Sure, Intel still dominates the market overall, but many gamers have come to call AMD home. Finally, though, Intel has something that could bring us all back around — if (and this is a big if) the development community gets behind the new technology and supports it. Like the Pentium III before it, the P4 has many new features that won't function at 100 percent in the absence of specific software instructions. With history as our guide, however, Intel shouldn't run into much difficulty in this regard — developers always seem to back its new standards. And even if they don't, this CPU is still insanely fast when running with DirectX 8 au natural.

Many of you probably recall a technology called SSE (Streaming SIMD Extensions — "SIMD" = Single Instruction Multiple Data). It was first introduced in the Pentium III and consisted of more than 70 new instructions that helped the PIII run much faster in games and applications that were optimized to take advantage of its power. SSE2 is what Intel has named the 144 new instructions that continue to bring strong improvements to what remains, basically, the same core as we had all the way back in the original PII.

In addition to the added instructions, the P4 runs on a greatly improved system bus. The fastest PIIIs still access memory at 133MHz, but the P4 quad-pumps (eww, that sounds nasty) 100MHz per cycle, making for a bus that's effectively 400MHz — thus helping to clear what has traditionally been a clogged pipe. Fancy words aside, this equates to increased performance for you.

Cache is always good to have, too, ya know, and the P4 has it in spades. It has 256K of level 2 cache running at full core speed, as well as a new Level 1 trace cache that stores micro-ops and then feeds them to the CPU's execution units in a steady, logical stream. Again, this

Continued on page 178

BENCHMARKS (ALL TESTS RUN ON A 1GHz ATHLON SYSTEM)

3DMARK 99 MAX
(All tests run in 16-bit color with 16-bit Z and triple buffer)
• 800x600
3DMarks: 11,089
CPU 3DMarks: 20,452
Game 1 Race: 128.0fps
Game 2 First Person: 97.8fps
• 1600x1200
3DMarks: 10,017
CPU 3DMarks: 20,193
Game 1 Race: 103.8fps
Game 2 First Person: 96.8fps

3DMARK 2000
(All tests run at 1024x768 in 32-bit color with 24-bit Z and triple buffer)
3DMarks: 7,342
• Game 1 Helicopter
Low Detail: 156.4fps
Med Detail: 110.7fps
High Detail: 51.7fps
• Game 2 Adventure
Low Detail: 144.6fps
Med Detail: 92.2fps
High Detail: 56.3fps
• Fill Rate with multitexturing: 840.5 million texels per second

QUAKE III
(All tests run in 32-bit color with all graphic effects set to max)
640x480: 173.3fps
800x600: 161.4fps
1024x768: 118.6fps
1280x1024: 77.1fps
1600x1200: 53.2fps

MDK2
800x600: 133.9ps
1024x768: 122.0fps
1280x1024: 64.3fps
1600x1200: 58.2fps

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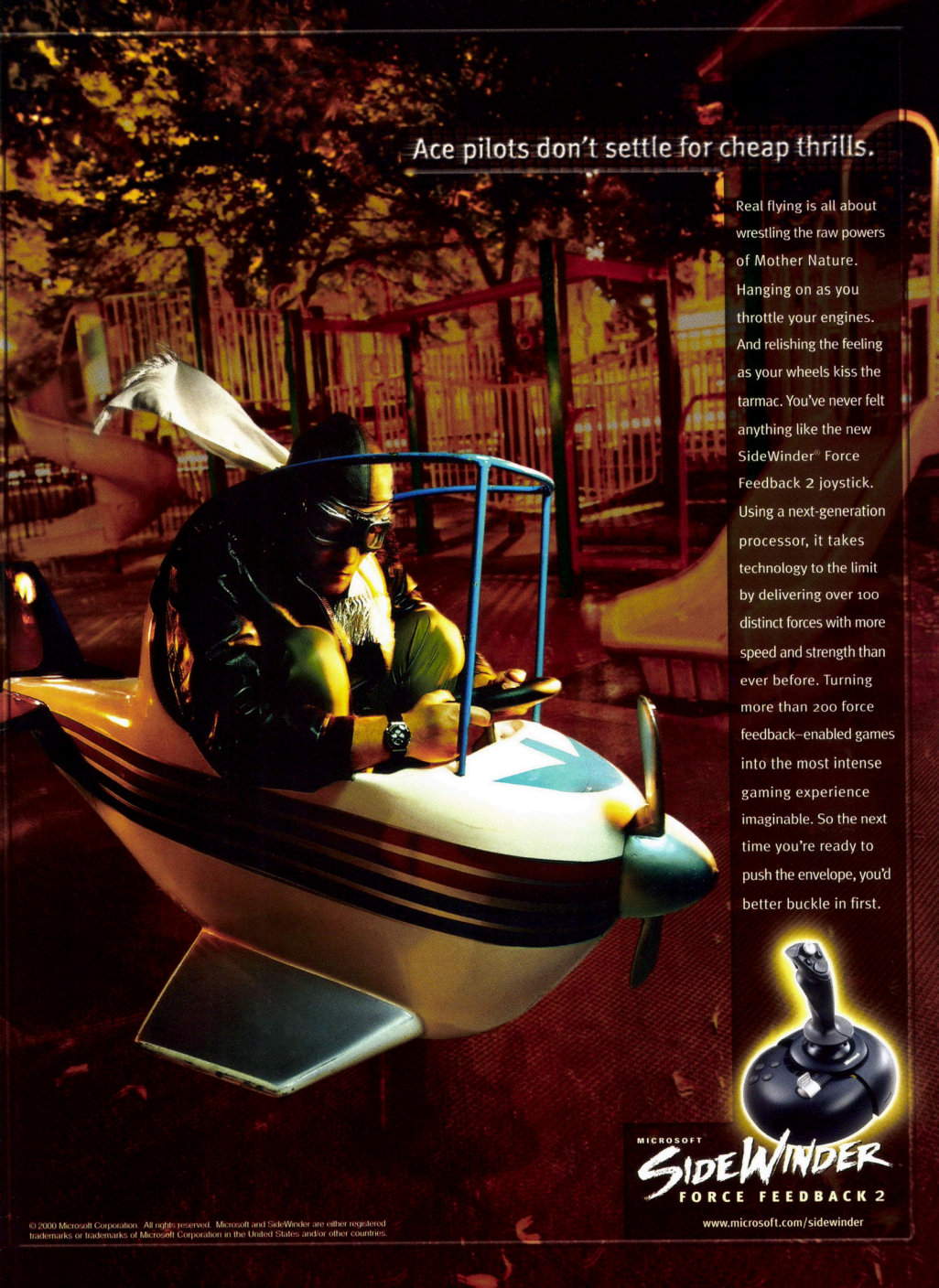
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FORCE FEEDBACK 2
www.microsoft.com/sidewinder
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SYSTEM SPECS

SYSTEM
Processor: 1.5GHz Intel Pentium 4
Motherboard: Intel DBG850 (850 chipset)
Memory: 256MB PC800 RAM

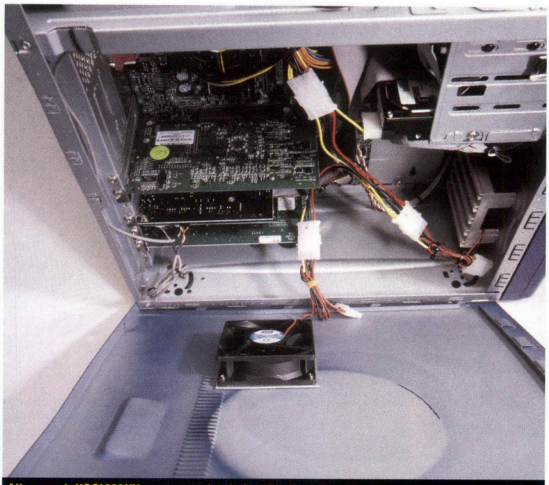
STORAGE
Hard Drive: 61.4GB IBM Deskstar
DVD-ROM: Pioneer 16x DVD Player
CD-RW: Plextor Plexwriter 12/10/32

EXPANSION
5.25" bays: 3
3.5" bays: 4
Bus Slots: 1 AGP, 5 PCI
RAM Slots: 4

VIDEO
Primary Display Adapter: 64MB GeForce2 Ultra
Hardware DVD Decoder: RealMagic Hollywood Plus
Monitor: 19" Viewsonic E790B

AUDIO
Sound Card: Creative Labs Sound Blaster Live! Platinum
Speakers: Klipsch Promedia v.2-400

OTHER
Modem: U.S. Robotics V.90 56K Fax Modem
Mouse: Microsoft IntelliMouse Explorer USB
1-Year 24/7 Onsite Warranty (no extra charge)
MS SideWinder Precision Pro
MS SideWinder Gamepad Pro USB



Alienware's KOOLMAXX system needs a hole drilled into the side of the case so a powerful fan can be mounted to it. Cool air is then blown at the video card from the outside.

Continued from page 176

equates to better performance for you — though mostly in productivity apps as opposed to games.

Big numbers are always eye-catching, so it's likely that you took note of this P4's monstrous 1.5GHz right from the start. This processor is a relatively large leap from the next fastest PIII or Athlon on the market today, and the reason is P4's new Hyper-Pipelined technology. Without throwing around any more needlessly big words, this feature (along with diminishing die sizes) is what allows the processor to be clocked so fast — and it's what will continue to drive future P4s to considerably higher clock speeds than possible with older technology like PIII.

The list of cool features goes on and on with the P4, but who cares about any of it if you can't play your games as fast as humanly possible. Even with many of the newer features running idle on current software, this Area 51 takes no prisoners. While the numbers aren't as fast as they could be with in-game optimizations, they're still jaw-dropping. Take a peek at our benchmark scores (previous page) to see what we're talking about. Put against a 1GHz Athlon running the same GeForce2 Ultra as the Alienware system, the Athlon might as well be standing still. At 640x480 and 800x600 (where frame rates aren't limited by the video card), *Quake III* scores are as much as 60fps faster on the P4. 3DMark 2000 shows similar, though slightly less impressive gains, as well. In fact, the only test that doesn't show much improvement is *MDK2*, but since none of these tests have yet been optimized for the Pentium 4, it's hard to pinpoint the exact reason. It also became considerably less worrisome to us when we loaded up some newer and upcoming games to see how they ran. *Giants*, for example, seemed to run smoother than we've ever seen it, and *Sacrifice* seemed to show similar improvements. Clearly, this is a CPU born of a desire to enhance performance on the games and applications of tomorrow.

Don't worry — the blue faceplate slides up to hide the machine's "ugly" white underbelly.

As great as the P4 seems to be at this early stage in its life, any computer, even one as powerful as the Area 51, is only as good as its weakest component. Amazingly, the machine doesn't contain a single component we would ever dream of calling weak! In fact, for all intents and purposes, the Area 51 is the exact same system we recommend as our "Dream Machine" on page 174 — and this is our newest list, so it's not as if Alienware knew ahead of time what components to include to blow our socks off. They accomplished that "feet" *[Did you have to go there? — Ed.]* on their own.

Really, our only complaint here is that, as with any high-end Pentium, you're stuck with RDRAM when running a P4. While the prices have come down on PC800 memory (anything slower isn't officially supported), it's still quite expensive, and there's still the long-term question of whether or not DDR will ever be adopted as an inexpensive alternative to RDRAM. The good news in the short-run is that if you can afford to spend $4,000 on a new computer, you can also afford the $200 or so needed for an additional 128MB of RDRAM.

Apple has made colored computers fashionable, and Alienware, not wanting to miss out on the phenomenon, has followed suit with its own line of colored PCs. The one we were sent was a metallic purplish-blue ("Conspiracy Blue"), but seven other colors (including black) are available upon request and can be previewed ahead of time at Alienware.com. Unfortunately, even though the keyboard you receive will be the same color as your PC, your monitor will not — Alienware hasn't quite figured out a good way to color them as of yet.

Colors and fancy-speak aside, all of Alienware's traditional, and now expected, expertise is present and accounted for in its latest Area 51. Excellent cooling, clean wiring, helpful documentation, and restore software are here as usual, and as you'd expect, if this particular system is too over-the-top for you or your budget, Alienware systems can always be customized to meet virtually any gamer's needs. So, regardless of whether or not the Pentium 4 ever takes off like it should, Alienware will always be a great place for hardcore gamers to shop.

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS The latest Area 51 packs incredible power — it's basically our "Dream Machine" come to life.

LOWS Pentium 4 optimizations are still a ways out; RDRAM; of course, this much power costs mucho cash.

BOTTOM LINE With or without optimizations, Alienware's latest Area 51 runs crop circles around the competition.

www.DailyRadar.com

■ MICROSOFT

SideWinder Strategic Commander

COMPANY
Microsoft
www.microsoft.com/sidewinder

PRICE
$64.95 (M.S.R.P.)

OTHER OPTIONS

WHAT GAMES CAN I PLAY THIS WITH? More than 20 game profiles ship with the Commander, but that doesn't mean you're limited to using it with those titles. You can program it to control just about any game under the sun — even non-strategy games. Don't worry: the programming software is easy to use and comes with all sorts of tutorials.

With Microsoft releasing its share of less-than-stellar gaming peripherals in the past year, we'd almost started to believe the company had lost its mojo. Thankfully, the Strategic Commander goes a long way toward rekindling some of that ol' black magic.

Designed from the ground up as a secret weapon for use by fans of real-time strategy games, this latest SideWinder hits the nail squarely on the head and really does make playing games like *Age of Empires II*, *Earth 2150*, and *StarCraft* easier. The ergonomic device conforms to your left palm (and left only) and places six programmable buttons right at your fingertips. You can use each of these six buttons separately or in conjunction with one of the three shift buttons located near your thumb — meaning that each of the six buttons can be programmed to do four different things, for a total of 72 different commands.

The Commander also has an easily accessible three-way profile switch that allows you to change your profiles on the fly right in the middle of a game. This comes in handy in games where the strategy involved changes as the game progresses. Regardless of the profile in question, if you forget to program a specific keystroke before your game gets underway, you can program basic functions into the Strategic Commander on the fly using its record button. Mouse clicks and complex keystroke commands such as delays must be programmed outside of the gaming environment using SC's included profiling software.

Although the base of the Commander is fixed, the portion you rest your hand on can be pushed backward and forward and left to right for the purpose of moving around a 3D game world. It can also be twisted, making it great for games that include rotational commands. Plus, a zoom button sits atop the device next to the six primary buttons for instant up-close access to the action points.

If there's a downside to this handy new controller, it's its slight learning curve. The payoff is well worth the effort for hardcore RTS gamers, though, so don't get discouraged — you'll be kicking ass in no time.

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS Works exactly as it's supposed to; buttons light up to show you which ones you've programmed and which ones you haven't.

LOWS Coming to grips with all of the possible configurations can take a little time.

BOTTOM LINE If you're serious about real-time strategy games, get serious about the Strategic Commander.

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Klipsch Promedia V2.400 4.1 Surround
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Innerworks™ Video Cooling & Optimization
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Pioneer 16X/40X DVD-ROM w/ Power DVD
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Plextor PlexWriter CD-R/RW 12/10/32 SCSI
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"The World's Fastest GPU"

- 'Nuff Said

"If you loved Baldur's Gate, then... Baldur's Gate 2 is bigger, more ambitious, and just a flat-out better game. Bioware and Black Isle have said they want this to be the only RPG you'll need this year—and, frighteningly, they may be right." *- Computer Gaming World*

"This sequel features fantastic locales, more spectacular monsters, and more character classes. It promises to be the most ambitious second edition D&D® game ever." *- Gamespot*

" ... Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn will be one of most important RPGs ever released. It is a beautiful epic, bringing to the field a new level of polish, detail and design. And, it's going to change everything." *- IGN*

T TEEN ESRB
Animated Blood
Use of Alcohol

nVIDIA graphics

Developed by BioWARE CORP

BLACK ISLE STUDIOS™

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons

OFFICIAL LICENSED PRODUCT

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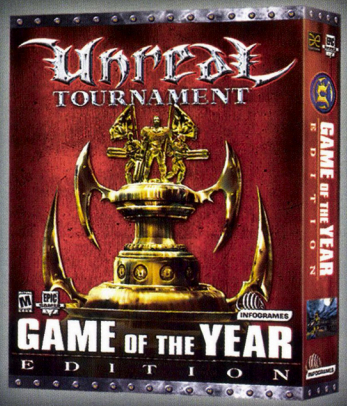
Our new "Game of the Year" Edition requires some special equipment.

Unreal Tournament's ballsy new "Game of the Year" Edition delivers its legendary first-person combat with all-new games (Tactical Ops, Chaos, Rocket Arena), skins, weapons and maps—all at an irresistible low price. Insane combat. Eye-popping graphics. Multiplayer heaven. Do you have what it takes to survive the gladiator bloodsport of the future?

It's just you and your opponent in hand-to-hand gladiator combat with **Rocket Arena.**

Check out insane new weapons including a sword, crossbow and Proximity Mines in **Chaos.**

Rampage through deadly cityscapes with real-world weapons in **Tactical Ops.**



MATURE M — Animated Violence, Animated Blood and Gore

PC CD ROM

EPIC GAMES

INFOGRAMES

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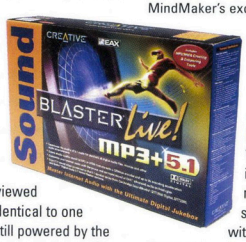
COMPANY
Creative Labs
www.soundblaster.com

PRICE
$99, $99, and $199 (respectively)

The Sound Blaster Live! family of sound cards doesn't have a lot of competition at the moment — especially in light of the fact that Creative Labs has literally swallowed Aureal, its next closest competitor in the sound-card market. While companies like Turtle Beach have transitioned away from Aureal-based hardware and are doing just fine with alternate technologies, it's very clear that Creative once again stands as the king of the sound-card hill.

Given that, for all intents and purposes, Creative has a monopoly in the marketplace, it surprised the heck out of us that the company felt like it needed to update its line of cards because: (a) the existing line was fantastic, and (b) when you're the king, you have the power to rule with an iron fist. You'll be pleased to know that these changes, while subtle, add benefits without taking any away, and don't end up costing the consumer more money.

All three cards reviewed here are technically identical to one another. Each one is still powered by the same EMU10K1 processor as always. The only big change is the addition of a digital output that not only allows users to connect such items as digital speakers, mini-disc players, and DAT recorders, but now officially supports Dolby Digital 5.1 to boot. (Driver updates for existing Live! cards allow for Digital 5.1 support as well.) While most hardware DVD decoders support this feature, if you've got a software-based decoder, you've probably been out of luck getting the digital sound you've wanted — until now. Be advised that you'll still need a Dolby Digital receiver and/or a snazzy set of Dolby Digital speakers like Cambridge SoundWorks' Desktop Theater 5.1 to take full advantage of this new feature. As always, analog four-speaker output is supported, too. And, of course, all versions of EAX are supported along with older versions of the now-defunct Aureal A3D standard.



SOUND BLASTER LIVE! X-GAMER 5.1

The big change here is that the game bundle of old has been updated with considerably newer, snazzier titles. Full versions of *MDK2, Deus Ex, Unreal Tournament,* and *Thief II: The Metal Age* make up the outright best gaming bundle of all time. As with all of the new Live! cards, Creative's new PlayCenter 2 is included, and acts as a playback station for your MP3s and CDs. PC2 doubles as a ripper for converting music and sound over to MP3. And although it doesn't say so on the box, MindMaker's excellent voice-command software, Game Commander, comes packaged, too.

SOUND BLASTER LIVE! MP3+ 5.1

What this package lacks in games, it more than makes up for in great sound software. Along with PC2 and Game Commander, the new MP3+ ships with Sound Forge XP 4.5, Mixman Studio 3.0, Cakewalk Express Gold 8.0, Mixmeister 2.0, and PixMaker (Creative Edition) — which, when used together, give you enough power to turn your bedroom or office into the equivalent of a small recording studio.

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

SOUND BLASTER LIVE! PLATINUM 5.1

This is the Big Kahuna of SB Live! cards. Not only does it contain all of the X-Gamer 5.1's game titles (as well as Game Commander and PC2), but it also includes many of the programs found in the MP3+ 5.1, as well as Cubasis' VST, WaveLab, and ReCycle programs. Cubasis' suite is similar to Cakewalk Express Gold, but is a considerably more powerful recording tool. This advanced recording software is included because the Platinum 5.1 comes with the new Live Drive IR, a hardware-based input/output unit that mounts in one of your front external drive bays. It contains all the audio inputs and outputs required to connect anything ranging from a MIDI keyboard to an electric guitar, all on the front of your PC. Headphones and microphones can also be connected to the drive, as well as digital equipment such as a minidisc player. An included wireless remote control rounds out the package.

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS Best sound cards on the market made even better with great software.

LOWS Those prone to fearing "The Man" may be put off by Creative's dominance.

BOTTOM LINE Existing SB Live! users need not apply, but every other gamer should have one of these cards.

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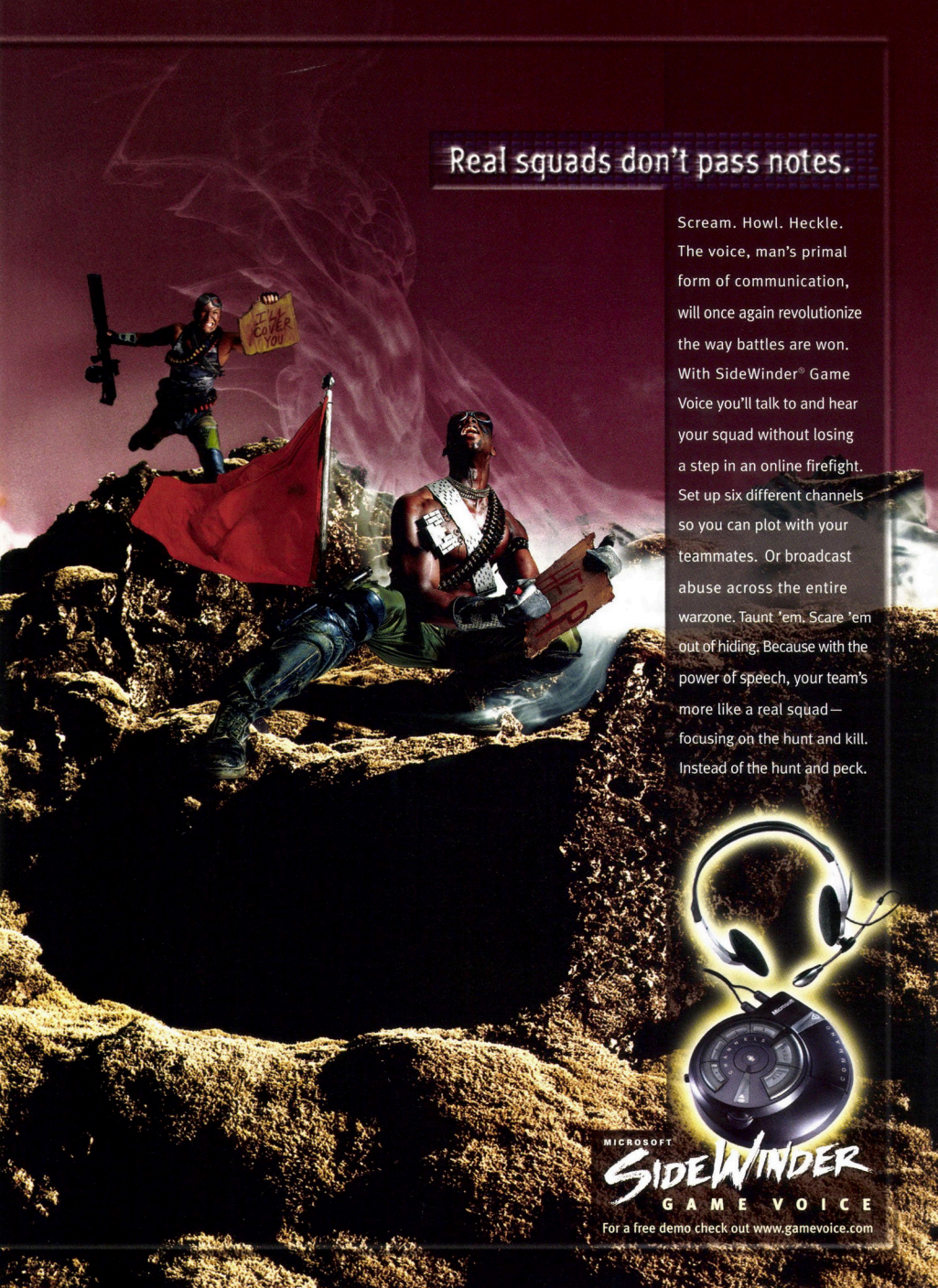
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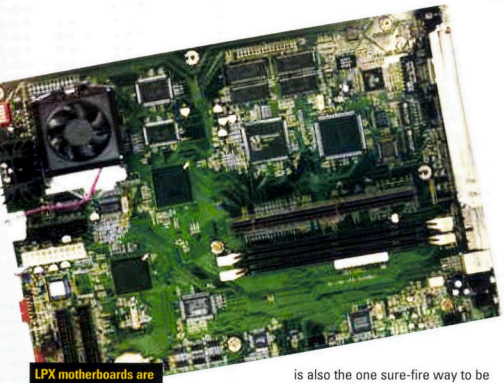

LPX motherboards are hard to come by.

Q **Hey Vede, I need to know if it's possible to share a single cable modem line between two computers. If so, what will I need to do to set this up?**
— Steve, via the Internet

A Well, there's only one strictly "kosher" way to do it, and that's to pay for a second IP address for the second computer. This is also the one sure-fire way to be able to play multiplayer Internet games, since, depending on the protocol and game, you'll need a unique IP for each PC. Now, of course, there are always loopholes…Muhahahaha! Though I'm sure there's software available that would do pretty much the same thing, hardware is probably the best way to go here (assuming that your cable modem is of the standard external Ethernet/RJ-24 variety — the one that uses lines that look like oversized telephone jacks on the end).

Here's what to do: go out and get yourself something like the Linksys BEFSR41 4-Port Cable/DSL Router. This puppy will cost a little under $150 and will allow you to surf the Net and play games on multiple computers — all with the single IP address you've been assigned by your provider. Your router will run with your original IP to get you up and running on the Internet, and then it will assign a unique IP to your computer and any other computers (up to 253) that you have attached to it. Of course, each additional computer will require a Ethernet/network card of its own to connect to the router; these will run around $30 each.

Anyone else out there have a good software solution? If so, email me at *gvederman@pcgamer.com*, and I'll tell everyone about it in next month's Q&A.

NEED HELP?

If you have a hardware question or comment, or a personal problem, write to:
Greg Vederman
Hard Stuff, PC Gamer
150 North Hill Drive
Brisbane, CA 94005
or email:
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Q **Over the last few months, you've consistently recommended AMD's 700MHz Athlon for your mid-range system.**

A router in action.

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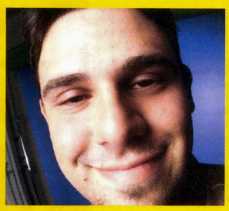

Q **You are the best part of *PC Gamer*. You are the one who helps people. You are like a Saint, blessing people with your words of wisdom. You should have your own magazine, and call it *VederMag*. Anyway, here's my question: I need a new computer, but I'm a wee bit short on cash. My system is perfectly fine, just slow, and the hard drive is too small (I have a PII 300MHz with an 8GB hard drive). Now, can I just buy a new hard drive and processor (I'd like a new 1GHz processor, if that makes any difference), or do I need a new motherboard, too? Thanks, man — you're the greatest! Viva Vederman!**
— "MonkeyNoggin," via the Internet

A You suck-up bastard. Flattery will get you everywhere, but only for today. I happen to be in a pleasant mood now that I've finally had my corns filed off. Most likely, your motherboard is too old to support CPUs as fast as 1GHz. If your system is a retail machine, contact your manufacturer and ask them for certain. If it isn't, and you don't have any documentation, open up your system case and look at the board itself to figure out its make and model. Once you have that info in hand, hop online and check the manufacturer's website to see what CPUs are supported.

Q **First of all, don't flatter yourself by thinking that I wrote to you because I knew you would be the only one who could give a true answer. (Since sucking up never works, I'm trying a little reverse psychology.) This is about the Microsoft SideWinder Force Feedback 2 Joystick. I can't get the setup program to run. I enter the disc and it says "Cannot find required file: HID.DLL." I tried emailing Microsoft, but every time I got a reply it was in the form of a question. Yes, it's true; you are my last resort and my only hope. My system config is: AMD Athlon 700MHz, 128MB RAM, 30.2GB HD, True 50x CD-ROM, and Windows 95. What could be the problem?**
— Daniel Evans, via the Internet

A By any chance, was the question that Microsoft kept asking you anything like "Daniel, were you dropped as a child?" Doofus, USB controllers only work with Windows 98 and above! I've been telling this to you people for years now! Not only that, but the joystick box itself lists the requirements as well. Go put Win 98 or Win ME on your system post-haste, and your joystick installation should be as smooth as a baby's butt. And in the future, don't pull any more of that reverse-psychology crap unless you want me to start telling you stories about my mother.

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But after spending a few minutes on pricewatch.com, I discovered that I could get a 750MHz for only about $5 more. Have there been problems with the Athlon 750MHz? Is that why you haven't been recommending it?

— John C. Borchers, via the Internet

A Have no fear, John! There's nothing as sinister as a "problem" at the heart of this matter. We have a two-month lead-time from when we create the contents of the magazine to when it actually hits the shelves. As a result, prices have often changed by the time readers get a hold of the latest issue. You're right — the difference between the 700MHz and 750MHz Athlon is only a few dollars right now. Why? Probably because AMD wants to push the 750MHz instead of the 700MHz — who wouldn't buy the faster chip if there's really no difference in price, right? If both of these chips are in your price range, go for the faster one without hesitation!

Q I have some questions in regards to upgrading my IBM Aptiva 2161-C85. I want to upgrade the CPU and motherboard, and have been looking at getting a new 600MHz to 800MHz Celeron (or Athlon) and a motherboard. When I went to IBM's website and checked the system specs for my Aptiva, I learned that my existing motherboard and case are in the LPX form factor. My questions are: (a) Can I purchase a new LPX motherboard (I've looked at several online computer retailers and have found none)? (b) If I find one, is it even worth it? (c) Should I forget about my case and simply buy a new one along with a motherboard and CPU? (d) Should I just cry like a baby and curl up into the fetal position while lamenting my lowly, penniless status as a student running a computer with horrendously slow framerates?

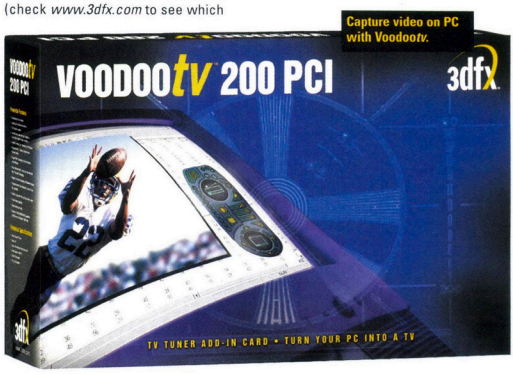
— Michael Guimond, via the Internet

A Here are the answers to your questions in the order you asked them: Yes. No. Yes. Yes.

Q I love taping my favorite TV shows so I can watch them over and over again, but my money is slowly being eaten up by the cost of videocassettes. Then I noticed how much cheaper CDs are than VHS tapes, and it made me think, is there any way to take the shows off the tapes and put them on my computer? There's gotta be, right? If so, what's the best way to do this? I am currently using a 733MHz Pentium III with 128MB of PC-133 SDRAM and an Asus V-7100 GeForce2 Pure 32MB.

— Protasivich, via the Internet

A Clearly, that's the dumbest thing I've ever heard. No, no such thing exists. OK, I lied: it's actually quite simple, really. Pick up either a Voodoo*tv* 100 or 200 (check *www.3dfx.com* to see which one best suits your needs), install it in a free PCI slot, plug in your VCR and record away. (Or simply record you favorite shows directly onto your PC to begin with once you're up and running on your Voodoo*tv*.) Just be aware that you're going to have to record and store your shows to your hard drive prior to burning them onto CD. That's going to require a lot of free space, so make sure you've got several GB free before you proceed.



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GAME BOY COLOR
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(1) Load up on necessary hardware in the armory before descending into the hive. (2) The death-smile of the leering xenomorph. (Isn't that an Edgar Allan Poe title?) (3) Beware the flying acid blood of the aliens: it'll damage you if you catch the splash. (4) You just never get used to the sight of humans entombed in the organic muck of a hive wall.

When we talk about add-ons and mods in "Extended Play," we're usually talking about new scenarios, new levels, and various other new tidbits tacked on to a game in order to extend its life by way of additional content or gimmicks. "Extended Play" has been the "afterthoughts" column for a long time. But the ambition level of some modders is tipping the scales in a new direction: now when we talk about add-ons, we're sometimes talking about adding on *emotions*. That's when games get *really* interesting.

Modders supply new textures, new models, new weapons, and new monsters. But most importantly, they can — when working at their very best — supply real feelings. The first great success was fear: the kind of on-edge tension that made you jump in your chair. And it wasn't a pro who first scared us; it was an amateur mod author.

So I thought I should pay homage to the first brilliant mod I ever played, and get the full story of its success. In a time when the first-person-shooter genre was still in swaddling clothes, an ambitious young New Zealander named Justin Fisher was setting a higher bar for game design — and emotion design — than almost any developer of the period. Fisher's brilliant contribution to the annals of mod-making deserves careful study if you're at all interested in groundbreaking gameplay.

ALIENS TC FOR *DOOM*: A TOTAL CONVERSION OF ID'S CLASSIC FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER

If you played it in its heyday, it was, flat-out, the most chilling experience you'd ever had playing a computer game. Based on James Cameron's film *Aliens*, the mod pitches you as a marine dropped inside a colony base to conduct a sweep. The first level is all descent: you make your way deep into the bowels of the seemingly empty compound, searching for signs of life, the tension ratcheting tight as you anticipate aliens that never appear. The first level ends with one of many brilliantly placed samples from the movie: "Whatever happened here, it looks like we missed it."

Then comes the second level. As you move down through the sub-levels, the gleaming high-tech corridors of the base degrade gradually into a green alien jungle, the grotesque catacombs of alien infestation. You start moving slow, dreading what you might find around the next blind corner. The *ping* of a motion-scanner contact startles you. Sergeant Apone's stern "Check those corners...check those corners..." gives you goosebumps. First you find colonists cocooned in the walls. Then the aliens ambush.

Calling this mod "scary" is a bit of an understatement.

Aliens TC was Fisher's baby — he made it by himself over six months — and it serves as a perfect object lesson in what mod-makers should aspire to.

Let's set the stage. As talented and innovative as they were, the id boys didn't have much in mind for *Doom* beyond the crafting of a fun twitch shooter. Sure, it had some startling moments, and you were never at a loss for thrills. But no one had anything more emotionally ambitious in mind. A select few envisioned a richer, more ominous application for the first-person action genre that id pioneered. With *Quake* and *Duke Nukem 3D* still in their infancies, mod authors were taking *Doom* and *Doom II* in directions that id could scarcely have imagined.

Justin Fisher, for one. The discovery that the game could be altered was a revelation, and got him thinking immediately about ways to add new depths to the *Doom* experience.

"I had been playing *Doom* for a few months before I heard it could be edited, and was by then completely desensitized to it," describes Fisher. "I'd just be playing by reflex with my attention elsewhere. This was a far cry from the first time I played *Doom*, when I got sucked right into it and spent an hour with nerves screaming, slammed around by tension and adrenaline, and eventually having to stop because my nerves were shot and I could barely stop shaking — something I had never experienced before."

But after the game began to grow stale for him, Fisher realized that new depths needed to be reached in order to revitalize it. With tools in hand, he set out to inject some new life into *Doom* by taking gameplay in a new direction.

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An alien gets ready to take a bite out of my head. Lousy alien.

"Like me, most experienced players had become emotionally detached from the experience, and it was our loss," says Fisher. "From the start, *Aliens TC* was designed to take detached, desensitized players, rip away the safety of that distance, and give them the experience of that first game of *Doom*."

And did it ever. The key innovation was to scale back on the run-and-gun, blast-wildly style of the original design. *Aliens TC* is about slow, cautious progress, as you inch your way through the terrifying alien hive. Instead of charging around corners, you find yourself creeping around them, dreading what lies around the next bend.

That Fisher pulled it off all by himself is a minor miracle. The mod is a masterpiece of texture work, model animation, level layout, and sound design. And all of it serves the single purpose of scaring you out of your chair (which the mod manages to do many times over).

The art throughout is perfectly on the mark, with great use of atmospheric sprites like pulsing alien eggs, slime dripping from ceilings, and cocooned colonists who are clearly *children*. Blechhh. All the texture work is inspired, closely mirroring the gunky claustrophobia of the movie and capturing that techno-grimy feel.

The weapons pay proper homage to the film as well. The shotgun, pulse rifle, smartgun, and grenade launcher provide a visceral edge to the alien-killing, as does the signature yellow power loader that appears in the mod's later stages (there are eight levels in all).

Most impressive is the sound design, which uses a crafty collage of samples from the film. Most of the mod is played in relative silence as you step lightly through the hive tunnels, tormented by the haunting ping of a motion scanner and the distant-yet-not-too-distant gurgling hisses of the xenomorphs. The whirring firepower of the pulse rifles is thrilling, and the overall ambience is made pitch-perfect by the samples of the marines' dialogue: Sergeant Apone's repeated warnings to "Check your corners," Hudson's terrified "They're right on top of us!" and Hicks' cries of "We are *leaving*!" during hectic level exits.

It all adds up to an exhilarating chill ride that holds up very well even to this day. Find out for yourself: *Aliens TC* can be downloaded at numerous sites across the web, with upgrades to include full-3D support and full-*Quake* functionality (see sidebar). The conversion of *Aliens TC* to *Quake* is top-notch as well.

Playing through it all over again, it's amazing to think that a single untrained man was responsible for all this goodness, and in an era when the slow-paced, nail-biting style of *Half-Life* was still just a glimmer in Gabe Newell's eye.

And speaking of which: Fisher is waiting for a U.S. visa so he can come to America and join the games industry. So if any developers out there are interested in one of the genre's earliest innovators, drop me a line and I'll get you in touch with Justin. We need to get this guy back in the trenches! PCG

REVAMPING THE *DOOM* ENGINE

If, like us, you haven't played *Doom* in awhile, you probably remember a sharp, detailed, well-lit ambient world. Boot it up today, and you'll find it's surprisingly hard on the eyes. Pentiums and 3D accelerators have spoiled our retinas rotten.

Do not fear. Thanks to id Software's generous release of the *Doom* source code a couple years ago, several new ports of the game have surfaced, supporting everything from mouselook to high-resolution video modes. *Doom* has never looked so sharp.

Here are the three primary ports, each with different strengths. They will all work from Windows with any version of *Doom* or *Doom II*, including shareware releases.

JDOOM

http://www.newdoom.com/jdoom/
The most beautiful of the ports, *JDoom* supports both DirectX and OpenGL, and adds special effects like lens flares.

DOOM LEGACY

http://www.newdoom.com/doomlegacy/
Like *Zdoom*, but also includes a split-screen two-player mode.

ZDOOM

http://zdoom.notgod.com/
Includes console, jumping, optional OpenGL support, and support for "dehacked" mods like the *Aliens TC*.

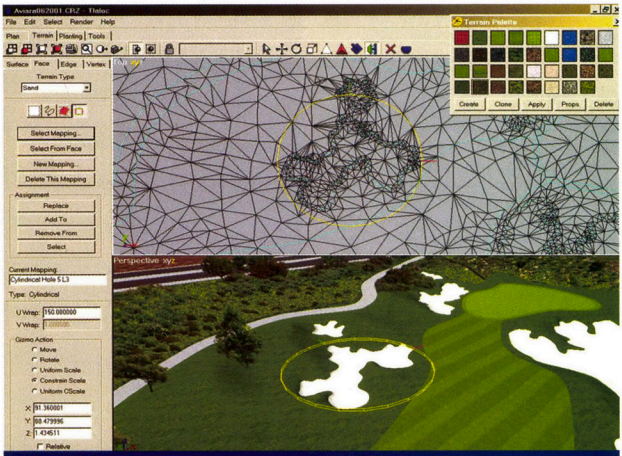
BUG PATCHES

- **Half-Life v. 1.1.0.4 (hl1104.exe)**
  - New *TF* Scenario Avanti: Challenges the offensive team to advance their flag to three successive capture points and conclude their run in the village cathedral, while the defense attempts to stall their efforts until time runs off the clock. The scenario takes place on the streets of an Italian village, with a wide variety of open spaces combined with tight corners and sniping positions.
  - New *TF* Scenario Flag Run: Requires cooperative teamplay as some units attempt to retrieve their flags from the enemy's base while other units ward off the opposing team's attempts to do the same. The scenario includes large, wide-open spaces in the center of the map with intricate base structures on either end.
  - New *TF* Scenario Casbah: Like Flag Run, Casbah challenges the opposing teams to guard and defend captured flags as they fight to retrieve their flags from enemy territory. Designed by Dave Johnston (cs_cbble, de_dust), Casbah promotes extremely fast-paced battles that can realize sharp momentum changes in no time at all.
  - Pyro's burn damage increased.
  - Heavy Weapons Guy's chaingun damage reduced.
- **SWAT 3: Close Quarters Battle v. 1.6.6.0 (swat3_166up_us.exe)**
  - Client hang when connecting to WON.net, necessitating Ctrl+Alt+Del to restart the game.
  - Operations menu-screen lag resulting from the Host changing some mission parameters.
  - Sound-related crashes in chat rooms.
  - Scenario Editor incompatibility with Windows ME (an unsupported OS) and memory-usage issues on all operating systems.
- **Unreal Tournament 432 Patch & Bonus Pack (UTPatch432.exe)**
  - Version 432 is completely network-compatible with all previous public releases of *UT*.
  - Faster server browser initial pinging of servers.
  - Team scoreboard holds more players.
  - Fixed grenade smoke in OpenGL.
  - Fixed some D3D-compatibility issues.
  - Faster server ping for servers with mutators.
  - Admins lose cheats and die when they log out.
  - Improved map decompression time.
- **Soldier of Fortune v. 1.06 "Gold" Edition (SOF_Gold_patch.exe)**
  - Updates *Soldier of Fortune* Retail to Gold Edition v. 1.06.
  - Adds new single- and multiplayer features with bug fixes, bots, skins, two new deathmatch modes, and 18 new maps.
- **Star Trek: Klingon Academy v. 1.02 (ka102us.exe)**
  - Check to validate ships added to multiplay.
  - Starbases no longer spawn next to each other.
  - Fixed weapons' (in fact, all resources') recharge-rate problem after warping.
  - Fixed the problem in which in-system warp would slow to a crawl if you went to the gunnery chair.
  - Added eight-button joystick support.
  - Added force-feedback support through DirectX.

ROB SMOLKA
pointafter@pcgamer.com

Tool Time

Sports-game developers should take a lesson from their first-person-shooter counterparts and give us the resources we want.



If we can create amazingly lifelike golf courses, why can't we build a simple baseball stadium?

For the past several years, the first-person shooter has dominated PC gaming. Sure, other genres cohabit the top of the charts, but the FPS is still going strong. One of the major reasons for this is the genre's flexibility. Ever since *Doom*, gamers have been given the chance to become more than just players of a game: they've had the ability to expand on the game, create their own levels, and more. Why aren't more sports games taking better advantage of this?

The idea of giving end users the tools to craft their own levels was really nothing new — players have been able to don the design hat reaching as far back as Activision's *Pinball Construction Set* in the early 1980s (and even before then, I'm sure). What *Doom* had going for it, though, was that its release coincided with the explosion of the Internet. If you designed a great level, all of a sudden it wasn't just you and your buddies who could enjoy it — hundreds of thousands of like-minded junkies out in cyberspace could also get in on the fun.

Why, then, are we sports gamers not given the same — or even a fraction of the same — support? Instead, we get goofy, useless things to play around with, like EA Sports' Face-in-the-Game feature. Has anyone ever made a replica of himself with this thing where the end result didn't turn out looking like you're a ground-zero nuke-blast survivor?

We're finally starting to see new games come with user-adjustable sliders that help balance difficulty and gameplay issues, but so much more can be done. Consider this: I can create an entirely new game using the *Quake II* engine, but no sports game since *Earl Weaver Baseball*, released more than a decade ago, has allowed me to build my own playing field (golf games being the exception). Okay, Earl's tools were pretty limited — fence height and depth were about all you could change — but in 10 years, no game has even tried to match it, much less better it.

I'm sorry, but it just can't be that difficult to let us build our own ballparks or ice rinks or stadiums: these are structures made of polygons and covered by texture maps. Sounds a lot like, oh, a level in any FPS, doesn't it? If gamers can re-create Augusta National using the course architect in any of today's golf games, you'd think it would be a major step down in difficulty to give us the tools to make our own home fields.

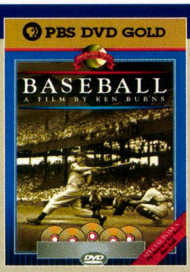
Despite the hurdles that developers place in front of them, many enterprising gamers have found ways to dig into the code and create everything from new uniforms to new stadium textures to different music playing within the game. Why must we be forced to be hackers, though? Technical support is the biggest fear, I suspect, as most of these teams are operating on a shoestring budget to begin with, and the added burden of trying to support additional program features would be impossible. This is an understandable concern, but it's a copout in my book.

Look at *High Heat*'s tune file, for instance. The company offers no support for anyone who chooses to fool around with it, but it's turned out to be one of the series' strongest inclusions. Those interested in learning about how it works can easily find information on the Internet, and fellow gamers are always willing to answer any questions. The same results would occur, I'm sure, for any other helpful program the designers gave us to make life easier. PCG

BASEBALL BLISS

For those of you with DVD players, I just wanted to point out that the remarkable *Baseball: A Film by Ken Burns* has finally been released. Debuting in 1994 on PBS, this documentary is broken up into nine innings: the first inning deals with the origins of the game up to 1900, and each episode then covers 10 years, with the ninth inning spanning 1970–1994. Each episode is two to three hours long, and the transfer to DVD is amazingly crisp and clear.

The DVD collection (10 discs in all) also comes with a bonus inning titled, appropriately enough, *Extra Inning*, which is kind of a "making of" feature. The list price of $199.99 may be a little steep, but you can find it online for around $130 or so. For your money, you'll get more than 25 hours of glorious baseball history told in a very entertaining style, and I guarantee that your love for the game will be heightened immeasurably. Buy or rent it today.



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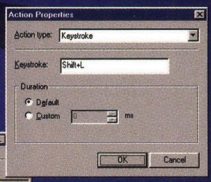

Adjustable actions

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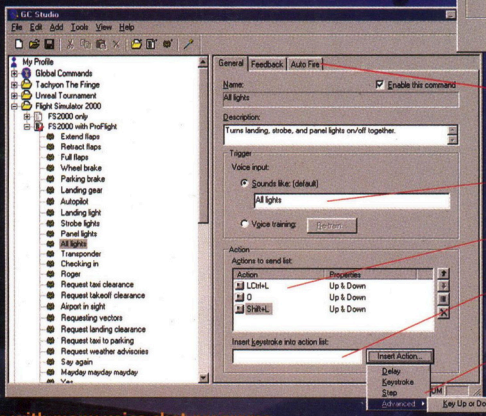

Multi-channel auto fire

Say a command and have it repeated continuously until you tell it to stop. Issue more commands while auto fire runs, including more auto fire commands!

No voice training required

Just type in what you want to say and you're ready.

Massive macro capabilities

Unleash up to 256 keystrokes per voice command.

Easy keystroke entry

Just press the key as you would in the game. Many special Windows keys and combinations are also supported.

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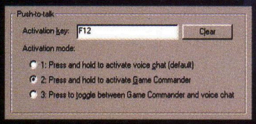
Configurable delay, key up, and key down actions, and step sequencing add more control capabilities than ever before.

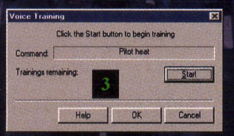
Works with many voice chat programs

Use push-to-talk to switch between Game Commander and popular voice chat programs (Windows 9x & Me only). Or use push-to-talk alone to enable command recognition.



Available voice training

For special cases, strong accents or non-English commands, voice training takes only three utterances.



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COLIN WILLIAMSON
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Great X-Pectations?

Our shooter guy thinks it's time to say "Out with the old, and in with the gruesome."

Any hardcore FPS dork can remember *exactly* where he was on the night of Feb. 24, 1996. id Software had just released Qtest, a technology demo of the original *Quake* engine, and the gaming universe finally got a taste of the next revolution in 3D shooters. Or lucky Pentium owners did, anyway: *I* spent countless hours trying to shoehorn the damn thing onto my 486/66, and wound up reducing the viewport to the size of a postage stamp to achieve a playable frame rate. And damn, it looked spectacular — even more so if you kinda squinted.

Five years later, I'm starting to get that same giddy anticipation for the next batch of engines headed our way. Quite frankly, it's about damn time we get something that humbles our beefy Athlon 800s and Pentium IIIs, 'cause playing *Quake III* at upward of 300fps is bordering on overkill. I miss the days when engines would take over your computer and beat the shit out of it, forcing you to run out and upgrade to the latest, greatest, most expensive gaming-related hardware you could afford.

Today's developers have more tasty hardware thingamabobs to exploit than ever before, including hardware T&L, stencil buffers, direct transform, pixel tapestries, emotion engines, and self-cleaning mice. Wondering what to do with all that crap? Here's my personal list of goodies I wouldn't mind seeing in the next generation of first-person shooters:

HONEST-TO-GOD INTERACTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Today's BSP-based engines are *not* particularly friendly when it comes to deformable environments: around 95 percent of every *Quake*-style level is rigid geometry that ain't goin' nowhere, no-how. Destroyable objects typically shatter and fade away, while shooting a wall pastes a picture of a bullet-hole on top of the texture. Doing something cool like infiltrating an office complex, knocking out four concrete supports, and watching the whole structure cave in on itself in real time would be a level designer's nightmare: the current batch of FPS engines simply aren't made to do this.

LOD

This is the good stuff. Dynamic Level of Detail technology allows developers to use ridiculous numbers of polygons in player models for unprecedented visual splendor. LOD scales the detail level up and down as meshes get closer and farther from the player's viewpoint, ensuring that up-close bad guys are bursting with detail. This can also be used to manage *lots* of enemies onscreen at once — *KISS: Psycho Circus* offered a taste of this frantic formula. If you developer types are feeling particularly gutsy, why not implement LOD on the environments as well? With the proper code in place, you can go bonkers with superfluous splines and a plethora of polygons.

Interactive, deformable environments like those in THQ's upcoming *Red Faction* should be an FPS standard. Look at the before/after difference in this room!

FACIAL ANIMATIONS

As much as *Deus Ex* kicked my ass with a pair of cleats and made me want to sell myself into slavery to Warren Spector, the protagonist's marionette-like mouth movements and unchanging expressions emoted about as well as Bruce Willis in *The Last Boy Scout*. Even worse, some games have the gall to paste an "open mouth" skin on top of the player's head during dialogue, resulting in a two-frame *Clutch Cargo* animation routine. Yeesh. The only guys who seem to be on top of this technology are Epic Games, who have good-looking facial stuff running in their new revision of the *Unreal* engine.

ACCURATE HIT DETECTION AND REAL-TIME INVERSE KINEMATICS

Soldier of Fortune is one of the most viscerally memorable action-fests in years, thanks to mega-precise model collision detection from Raven's custom GHOUL animation system. Shooting terrorists in different body parts produces radically different reactions, and detachable body parts provide indescribably gory, limbs-a-flyin' entertainment. This stuff should be *standard* in future FPS releases. My personal dream is to have a real-time IK physics engine take over on death animations, allowing corpses to spin, fly, crumple, and roll down stairs in accordance with standard human kinematic restraints.

GAMEPLAY THAT TRANSCENDS SIMPLY FINDING KEYS, OPENING DOORS, AND SHOOTING THINGS

I'm sure developers have this figured out. At least, I hope so (gulp).

Join us next month for a patented Killing Box irreverence break, as we dissect the first direct-to-DVD movie based on a first-person-shooter — and I do mean *dissect*. See ya then. PCG

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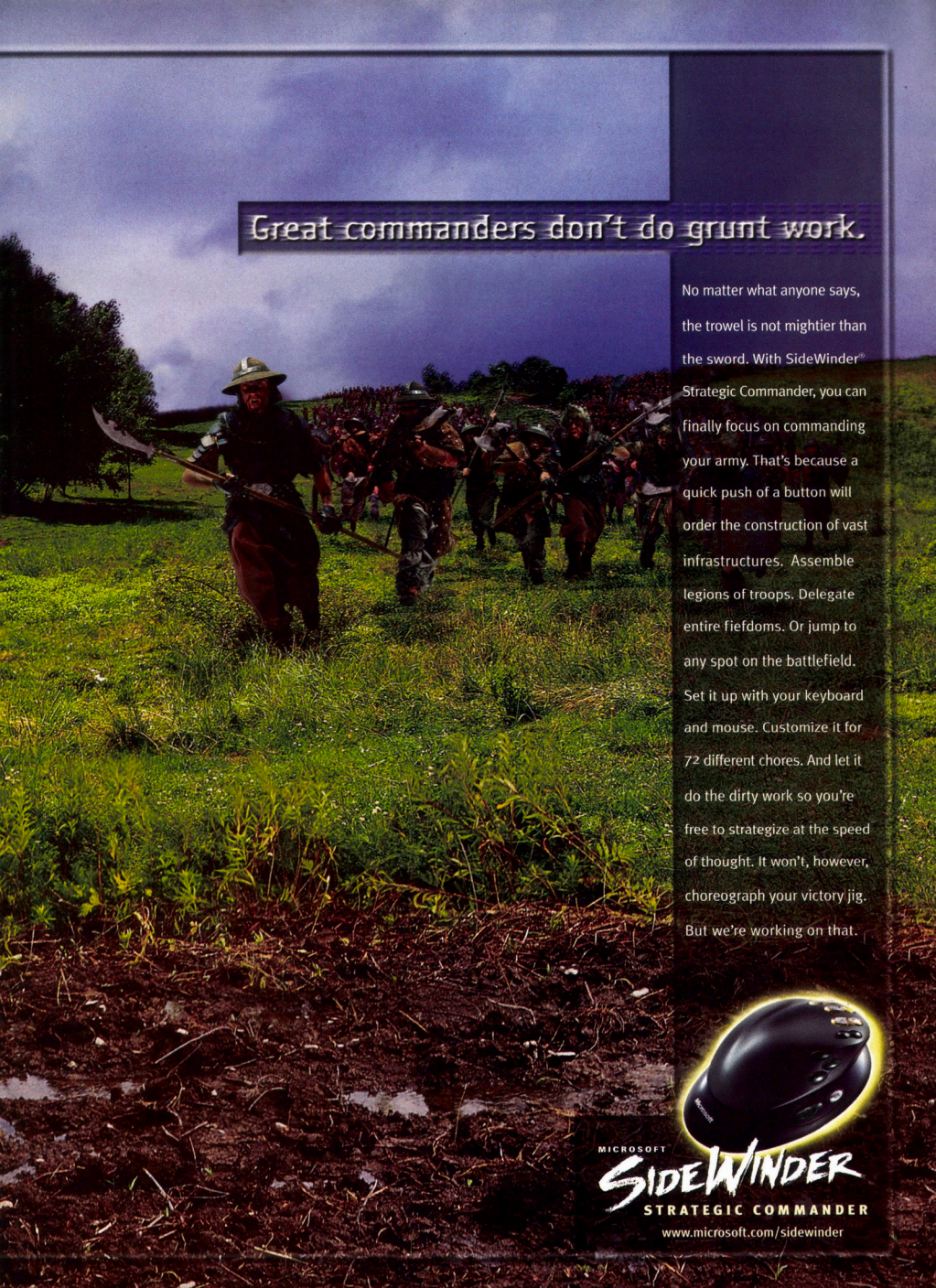
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For Goodness' Sake

When a gamer gets punished for evil roleplaying, Wolf wonders how much is too much?

A disturbing thing happened in *EverQuest* recently: a player was actually *punished* for their roleplaying. I've always been a strong advocate of "in-character" roleplaying in multiplayer RPGs. I'm talking about *actual* roleplaying — creating a character that lives in your mind, and that you bring to life for others with your words, choices, and actions.

One of the best-known massively multiplayer roleplaying games online today is also the source of much of this roleplaying energy. *EverQuest* can be played strictly for the mechanics, or you can really try to play a fictitious character to its fullest. There have been online marriages between characters played by people who have never met; friendships have sprung up between people who would never say two words to each other in the outside world; and people's real lives have been affected by the happenings in the fictional realm of Norrath. While this sounds great, very few people who play the game actually *roleplay* this way. Most players just wander the countryside looking for fire beetles to slay or quest items to gather. I've always encouraged players to at least make the effort to roleplay a character.

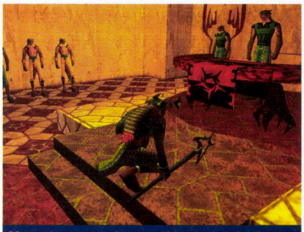
Zatozia the Torturess is a force of evil in *EverQuest*, but players are told they shouldn't be quite *this* evil.

But as I said, the hardest characters are the evil ones. Not the dumb evil ones — the PKers from any number of online RPGs who get a perverse sort of power trip from annihilating fledgling players. I'm talking about evil sorcerers who can join a group and cause strife by playing mental games with the other party members, or those characters who send chills through other players with simple conversation.

These characters are a real challenge, both to experience and to roleplay. The first time I tried to play an evil character (an Iksar monk in the *EverQuest* expansion *Ruins of Kunark*), I failed miserably and ended up roleplaying an overly curious lizardman.

But some people are skilled at roleplaying evil characters, and the roleplaying realms are all the better for their involvement. One such player of *EverQuest*, who goes by the name Mystere, was punished for roleplaying a bit *too* much. While developing an idea for a new character, a female Dark Elf rogue, Mystere wrote a short story that was posted to two different *EverQuest* message boards. Fiction written by players is posted all the time, and Mystere had written several previous stories based on the *EverQuest* universe. This particular story depicted an older Dark Elf who had a young female Dark Elf slave — the slave being Mystere's new character. During sexual intercourse that smacked of rape, the slave scratches the older Dark Elf with poisoned fingernails, thereby killing her master and escaping. Mystere's intent was to create a young character who had reason to be neither nice nor gentle to anyone, and whose personality was formed in the evil setting in which the Dark Elves are steeped.

Verant Interactive, the creators of *EverQuest*,



Many players may have trouble playing the Iksar as the malevolent race they are.

were notified of the story's existence by a concerned parent and banned Mystere from the game with no warning. Verant said it wanted to protect its intellectual rights from being used in such a graphic story that appeared to describe the rape of a young girl. The full details of Mystere's banning, as well as an interview with Mystere, are available on *DailyRadar.com*, at *www.dailyradar.com/features/game_feature_page_1613_1.html*.

I haven't spoken directly to Mystere, and I don't fully agree with the decision to write such a graphic story. (I read it before it was removed from the message boards; I found it slightly disturbing, but no more so than a Stephen King novel.) But I certainly don't agree with Verant's decision to summarily ban someone who, while perhaps a bit overzealous, was just trying to roleplay within a mythos the developer created. The description of Zatozia the Torturess on the official *EverQuest* website (*everquest.station.sony.com/hht/h_profile_zatozia.shtml*) describes in graphic detail the torture of a player character who gets caught in the Plane of Hate — and in my opinion it's just as graphic, if not more so, than the story written by Mystere. But I'm not going to argue whether or not Mystere or Verant is wrong or right. The fact is, both made decisions that made sense to them.

Roleplaying is an art mastered by very few. It's a skill increasingly difficult to find in a genre that promotes strategic manipulation of game mechanics over immersion in the game world. And it's even more difficult to find players who can successfully roleplay the evil that everyone else wants to fight against. It's unfortunate that evil roleplayers can be punished for being *too* evil. Where is the line drawn? PCG

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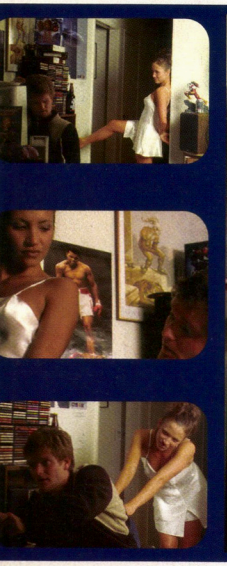
WE UNDERSTAND...



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WILLIAM R. TROTTER
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Remember: Gaming Is Gaming

"What if?" scenarios are a harmless pastime for wargamers, but to real-world veterans, they're a different thing altogether.

We wargamers love to tinker with history. We especially like to play "What if?" scenarios, and the very *last* thing on our minds when we do so is disrespect for the real soldiers. Indeed, we usually feel that we are *honoring* their courage by re-examining their campaigns.

But we sometimes forget that the *real* decisions were made by men on the spot, who didn't have the possibility of "alternative" outcomes, who had to play with the cards fate had dealt them, under circumstances of chaos, terror, exhaustion, and violence that *no* computer simulation can replicate.

And when we wargame a battle that took place in 1942, we're open to contradiction by veterans who were *there*, and who might not appreciate having their actions second-guessed by some smart-ass columnist writing from the comfort of his air-conditioned study. When I wrote about Corregidor in the October column, I did so because I wanted to give the American defenders the sort of victory they *deserved*. Not once did it cross my mind that the real veterans of that siege might take exception to my little history-altering fantasy.

To the valiant old men who actually defended The Rock, that battle was the defining moment of their lives. One of those gentlemen wrote the following letter, which should be required reading for *every* wargamer:

"Dear Sirs:
I read with great interest Mr. William R. Trotter's column "Defending 'The Rock'" in your October 2000 issue, and have a few comments. Before I begin, I should inform you that I was a rifleman in the 1st Battalion, Fourth Marine Regiment, serving in defense of Corregidor. After General Wainwright was forced to surrender, my comrades and I endured 34 months of brutal captivity at the hands of the Japanese. Your article was brought to my attention by my grandson.

If only Mr. Trotter had been there to guide us...

He and every other armchair general who has the luxury of hindsight and the audacity to second-guess the actions of those of us who risked our lives in battle, have the right to do so. My issue is with his assertion that the presence of the Japanese tanks led to the downfall of Corregidor.

Mr. Trotter asserts that the key to victory was in destroying the Japanese tanks, which he listed as four Type-95s. In fact, the Japanese had five tanks: four Type-97s and a captured American M-3. He describes the vehicles as "weakly armored, slow, and rickety." Interesting observation on his part. My observations were somewhat different. I saw my buddy Private Barnes empty three .30-caliber belts at a Type-97, to no effect. I saw two Filipino cavalrymen physically place grenades atop the M-3, yet the vehicle continued. The men were killed seconds later.

When the tanks began their attack, we had no weapons heavier than light machine guns and a few grenades (no satchel charges). We did what we could, and I lost many good friends trying to stop those tanks. We were finally forced to pull back as the tanks began methodically destroying our positions one after the other.

As for Mr. Trotter's statement that "it was the tanks," he must remember that we had sustained heavy casualties, and our ammunition was depleted. It wasn't "the tanks," but the fact that our positions were continually being turned by the Japanese — that and the constant naval, air, and artillery bombardment. Not to mention the fact that most of us hadn't eaten in three days, and barely had any water in the brutal Philippines heat. I'm sure [Trotter's] "battle" was "fought" in air-conditioned comfort with a refreshing drink and the ability to pause for rest or to grab something to eat — luxuries we did not enjoy.

His final statement, that playing a game verified a theory he's held for decades, is an insult to me and my fallen and surviving comrades. Well, sir, our theories are based on actually participating in the battle. The presence of those tanks sped up the end of our defense, but the outcome was inevitable even if the tanks had not been there. Perhaps Mr. Trotter would like to come to our reunion this fall and tell us about his battlefield experience on Corregidor and what we did wrong and should have done instead. Maybe he can explain our mistakes to the widows of the Marines and soldiers who never remarried after they lost their husbands during that battle.

I am 82 years old and think that Mr. Trotter is nothing more than an armchair general whose battlefield experience has come from books and boardgames. He is referred to as a colonel, and that's laughable. A real colonel was Sam Howard, my regimental commander, who wept when he realized he was being ordered to become the first Marine in history to surrender his unit to the enemy. Come to our reunion, Mr. Trotter, refer to yourself as a colonel in our presence, and let's compare battlefield experiences. Mine are real.

Sincerely,
John Hawkins"

On behalf of all wargamers, I salute Mr. Hawkins and his comrades for their valor and sacrifice.

Sometimes, the words "It's only a game" seem pathetically lame. PCG

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Building the Perfect Racing Sim

Andy's offers his mix-and-match formula for a heaven-sent driving experience.

Mix *GPL*'s physics, *Mobil 1*'s graphics, and *NASCAR 3*'s audio, and you've got one sweet little racing sim.

The "perfect" racing sim: an impossible dream? Sorry, but I don't believe that for a minute. I may not know the difference between source code and Morse code, but I've put enough racing sims through their paces to appreciate that we're edging closer and closer to that elusive goal with each new title.

With visionaries like David "*Grand Prix Legends*/*NASCAR 4*" Kaemmer, Geoff "*Grand Prix 3*" Crammond, Rich "President of Papyrus" Garcia, and the West brothers (*World Sports Cars*) behind the wheel, sim fans are being steered into a whole new world of high-fidelity vehicle dynamics and photo-realistic graphics.

Taken individually, each of today's hottest racing games contains a significant flaw or two. But if you were to cut and paste all their best bits, you'd end up with one of the most awesome driving experiences imaginable. So grab your scissors and glue pots and play along: Sim-Building 101 is now in session.

PHYSICS/DRIVING MODEL

At the time of writing, this one is a slam-dunk. The 288Hz physics model featured in Papyrus' *Grand Prix Legends* still remains the ne plus ultra of driving models for PC racing simulations. Not only does it put the competition to shame with its amazingly realistic vehicle dynamics, but it also demonstrates just how much a properly coded 6DOF (Six Degrees of Freedom) physics model can enhance the overall driving experience. The sim's crash dynamics also include some of the most convincing damage and rollover effects ever. Does it get any better than this? Well, with Papyrus' *NASCAR 4* and Empire/West Racing's *World Sports Cars* just around the corner, the answer to that question seems to be a definite "probably." But until then, *GPL* remains the leader of the pack here.

GRAPHICS

This one is tougher to pick because developers are practically falling all over one another in the race to deliver the sweetest-looking visuals on the planet. If I have to choose, though, I'll go with EA's *Mobil 1 Rally Championship*. Highly detailed car models, stunningly beautiful scenery, and some state-of-the-art lighting effects push this British import just far enough ahead of the pack to earn the nod here. There's a huge logjam of close runners-up, however, and some of the pre-release screenshots from *World Sports Cars* and *NASCAR 4* (hmm...those two again) suggest that the race will get much closer.

AUDIO

No contest — *NASCAR 3* all the way. No one else has managed to convey the sense of sheer sound "mass" and audio fidelity that Papyrus' flagship sim delivers. When funneled through a sound card that supports A3D 2.0 or DirectSound 3D, *N3*'s positional 3D audio effects are the best in the business.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI is one of the hardest things to get right in a racing sim, and it's also one of the most rewarding components when it *is* done properly. Although it's a bit of a toss-up, I'm going to go with MicroProse's *Grand Prix 3* over *GPL* because of the former's higher degree of scalability for novice drivers. The AI in *GPL* is quite amazing in its own right, but most players grow tired of having Jim Clark kick their ass every time out.

MULTIPLAY

NASCAR 3 claims another victory here by virtue of its support for a whopping 32 players on Sierra's free WON.net matchmaking service. Though a broadband Internet connection is necessary to eliminate most of the warping concerns, it's tough to imagine anyone else topping this title for ease of use and sheer number of warm bodies.

EXTRAS

The pure fun factor of games like *NASCAR Heat* and EA's *NFS: Porsche Unleashed* and the awesome wet-weather effects of *GP3* must also be given their due before the book can be closed on our "perfect" driving sim. These elements may not make or break the games involved, but they certainly add a hell of a lot to their replayability.

So our final product is an amalgam of half a dozen racing titles representing a disparate collection of driving disciplines. It's pretty damned unlikely we'll ever see the Kaemmers, Crammonds, and Wests of this world quitting their day jobs to collaborate on such a project, but here's hoping that they're at least looking over each other's shoulders. Our "perfect" racing sim might be only a year or two away if they're paying attention. PCG

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A GOOD GAME IS A GOOD GAME IS A GOOD GAME

I'm an avid PC gamer and a longtime reader of your magazine. I'm also an avid console gamer (gasp!) and subscribe to one of your "sister" publications as well as yours. I've noticed in your last two issues that your editor-in-chief has gone out of his way to diss console games and mentions that he hasn't played anything on a console "that doesn't blow (other than *Virtua Tennis*)." While I appreciate the nod to that game, I feel that he's doing many readers of your magazine a disservice. Let's face it: a lot of PC games "blow," too. Would it be fair for a console player to say that the only PC game "that doesn't blow" is *Half-Life*? My guess is that if your EIC read something like that in a console magazine, he'd laugh it off as nonsense. So why would he say something like that himself in his own magazine? As far as I'm concerned, as hardcore gamers, we owe it to ourselves to play the best games on every platform — not just the ones on our "favorite" system.

— Brian Kreitzer
via the Internet

PC Gamer *Editor-in-Chief Rob Smith responds: Hey, I'm as big a fan of a good game on any system as the next gamer. I got an N64 just to play* Zelda, *and I thought it was great. But this frenzied haze of console hype surrounding PS2 plain bothers me. None of the games at launch (with the possible exception of* Madden *— and the PC version is pretty good) are worthy of the hype. So I bought a Dreamcast and have enjoyed a number of games, particularly* Virtua Tennis, *but I'm not half as excited about any DC or PS2 games as I am about PC titles like* Deus Ex, Elite Force, Red Alert 2, Black & White, FIFA 2001, *and even the upcoming* Battle of Britain.

WE ALL JUST DRANK IN COLLEGE (EXCEPT FOR LI)

My name is Dan and I'm a freshman at UC Irvine. I'm currently majoring in Engineering, but it's a major that requires a lot of studying. Unfortunately, I don't have time to study. You see, I have a problem: I'm addicted to PC gaming. More and more PC games keep coming out every month, and I feel that it's my responsibility as a hardcore gamer to play them. Of course, I don't buy any game unless *PC Gamer* rates it as 85% or higher.

I know I should budget my time more wisely so I can get my schoolwork done, but I just don't think I have it in me. PC gaming has too strong of a hold on me. Luckily, since I'm still in my first year at school, I have the option of changing my major to something that's more my speed. What kind of college degrees do most of you guys at *PC Gamer* have? Journalism? Computer Science? Underwater Basket Weaving? My point is, I'm extremely jealous. It seems to me that you have dream jobs — my dream job, anyway. What does it take to get a job interview over there? Please tell me what to study so that I have a chance of working on the magazine once I'm done with school.

— Daniel Rincon
via the Internet

Here's the rundown, Daniel:

Editor-in-Chief Rob Smith: *Degree in Classical Studies (Greek and Roman literature, history, and language) from University of Wales* [You've got to be kidding me... — Vede]

Executive Editor Dan Morris: *No degree (Senior standing in Magazine Journalism from San Jose State University)*

Senior Associate Editor Greg Vederman: *No degree (Senior standing in English Literature from San Francisco State University)*

Previews Editor Jeremy Williams: *Degree in Comparative Religion from Kenyon College* [I guarantee you that he still doesn't know who Chanukah Harry is... — Vede]

Associate Editor Li Kuo: *Degree in Creative Writing from UC Riverside*

Features Editor Chuck Osborne: *Degree in Sociology (with Minor in English) from University of Texas in Austin*

Managing Editor Corey Cohen: *Degree in English and Psychology from UC Santa Barbara (Corey doesn't actually review the games; he just yells at us when we don't review them fast enough.)*

Clearly, based on our degrees (or lack thereof), the only true prerequisite for getting a job with us is that you love PC games and that you're able to write about them intelligently.

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Fluffy sure does make for good eatin'!

WHEN ANIMAL-RIGHTS ACTIVISTS ATTACK

The Animal Rights Coalition in Minneapolis has received several complaints about some comments made in *PC Gamer* regarding decapitation of cats and the worthlessness of cats that makes them deserving of decapitation and torture. Is the author of these comments an employee of *PC Gamer* or a freelance contributor? Are the statements made the opinion of your publication or editorial comments?

— Sandra McNeal
Animal Rights Coalition

Assuming for a moment that this letter is legitimate (which it likely isn't): no offense, Sandra, but if you had bothered to really interpret any of the comments you claim to have read, you'd have noticed that they were made entirely in jest. Additionally, we'd like for you to call us and apologize for sending us such email in the first place. It displays a "guilty until proven innocent" attitude that is both disrespectful and lazy considering you seem to have given our comments absolutely zero thought prior to overreacting. If you do call us, maybe we'll stop using our kittens as footstools here at the magazine. [Kidding… — Ed.]

IT'S ALL ABOUT BEING THERE FOR SCOTT

I want to thank you guys for being there for me. Nowadays, with the cost of games being so high, bad purchase decisions are more frustrating than ever. Thankfully, as soon as I started subscribing to *PC Gamer* (over two-and-a-half years ago), I discovered something wonderful — that all of the games I had purchased and hated prior to subscribing, you guys also disliked. Ever since then, I've always waited for you to rate a game before buying it. You all do a great job, and you're a valuable asset to PC gamers everywhere.

— Scott Freeman
via the Internet

Thank you so much, Scott! We're glad that we're able to help!

MEET THE **NEXT GAME GODS**

Our "Meet the Next Game Gods" feature seems to have drummed up its fair share of controversy. Here's a sampling of the different types of letters we received.

ALL WITH THE HATING AND STUFF

The title of your latest issue pretty much takes the cake as the most offensive cover I've seen on a gaming magazine *[referring to Nov. 2000's "The Next Game Gods" cover — Ed.]*. Glorifying individual people in an industry based on team effort is shameful and demeans everyone else who works on the games. Speaking as a developer, I would never have consented to this type of story to begin with, but I guess if it helps you guys sell a few more magazines, then more power to you, right? Who cares that it doesn't paint an accurate picture of the industry or that features like yours are going a long way toward making the video-game industry even more like Hollywood than it already is!

— Geoff Howland
via the Internet

Geoff, there's a real difference between being right in theory and being right in practice. In theory, of course you're right: speaking to only a few "lead" people isn't any way to paint the most representative picture of what's going on in the industry. But neither is picking a few "non-lead" people. Our position was that by choosing faces and names that our readers already knew and recognized, we were helping them to want to know more about the inner workings of the gaming industry. Plus, have you ever sat in a room with eight programmers and tried to get them to talk about anything? A big part of the reason we picked the people we did for our round-table discussion was that we knew they'd actually speak to one another in a constructive manner.

As much as you'd like to remove yourself from the Hollywood paradigm, the fact remains that whenever you're involved in a collaborative medium — be it games or film — there's almost always one driving force behind the "vision" that you find yourself working so hard on. In film, that person is usually the director. In games, it's usually the lead designer. Love it or hate it, those are the people that most readers and fans look to for information on the future of the industry.

We most certainly weren't saying that the work you do on your game is any less important than the work done by anyone else on your team, Geoff. What we were saying is: "Hey, readers! Take a look at what these select individuals have to say about the gaming industry. Maybe after you're done reading our feature, you'll love them or hate them so much that you'll want to get into the games industry, too!"

STEVIE WHO?

Why is Stevie Case in "The Next Game Gods" feature, guys? I thought the feature itself was great, and that everyone involved had something interesting to say, but the fact remains, of all the people on the list, Stevie is the one person without a game of her own. Sure, she worked on *Daikatana*, but she wasn't the lead designer, and even if she had been, I'm not sure that the lead designer of one of the biggest jokes ever should necessarily be in the running to be a "Game God," either.

— Mark Rossi
via the Internet

Some people seem to be focusing too much on the title of our feature and not enough on what it actually said. The "Next Game Gods" name was used as a springboard, an entry point — a way to tell our readers that they should be interested in what these people had to say about the gaming industry. It wasn't meant to focus the reader's attentions on the résumés of those involved — necessarily.

We knew that Stevie had some fascinating things to say about the industry, and would articulate them well in the round-table surroundings. As the feature ran, her "résumé" may have stood out more than it should have in light of the assembled cast. Regardless of that, you seem to have picked up on the most important issue, Mark. In your letter you note, "everyone involved had something interesting to say." Our hope for the feature was that these prominent people would get together in a room and talk about the gaming industry in a way that was entertaining and informative to the reader. That's exactly what they did — all eight of them — independent of their pedigrees.

NATHANIEL + STEVIE

I've loved your magazine for years, but I must say that when I opened up my mailbox and saw "The Next Game Gods" cover, I was bestownded *[okay, that is so not a real word (but should be) — Ed.]*. The woman on the cover was hot! She looked like the type of person a company would put in a game to attract teenagers — not someone who'd actually make them herself. After reading what she had to say in the feature, however, it's apparent that she is a true professional. Rock on, Stevie!

— Nathaniel Meador
via the Internet

Love 'em or hate 'em, at least they're having fun.

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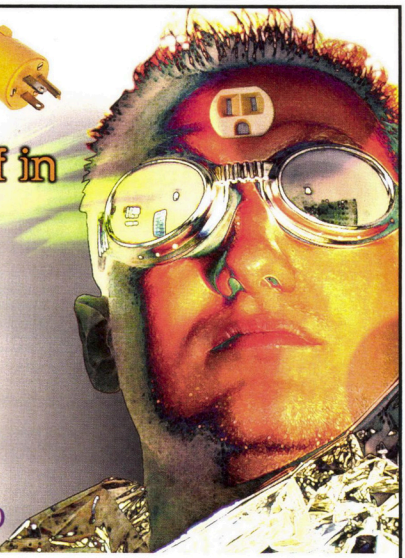

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The chirpy Northern Irish demeanor of Dave Perry quickly helped his studio, Shiny Entertainment, become a darling of the media. After *Earthworm Jim*, PC (and PlayStation) action/adventure *MDK* garnered some 100 magazine covers worldwide, if less respectable sales. With Shiny's latest offering, *Sacrifice*, about ready, we fired our infamous questions at the developer's founder...

Dave Perry

How the devil are you?
Very well. Busy as hell. I keep thinking about all the cool stuff I'm going to do someday when I get a break. Twenty years later, I'm working every spare moment I have — I'm in an airplane right now. (Thanks a lot to those damn inventors of PDAs.)

What's the best game you've played recently?
I personally had a good time with *SWAT 3*. I liked sneaking around, then sending others through a door for me — that is, if I felt I might be walking into a trap. I think the game is some sort of psychological test.

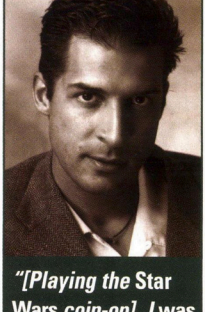
What's the worst game you've ever been involved in making?
Paperboy II on Sinclair Spectrum. *[Agreed: I bought it. — Rob.]* I made that game without any reference 'cause we don't have paperboys in Great Britain. I didn't even have the arcade machine to look at. [Slaps forehead.] Worse than that was a game called *Great Gurianos*. That was when I realized that my art teacher was totally wrong and my art does stink. It was the last time I called myself an artist/programmer/singer.

***Will there be a second coming of (the)* Messiah?**
No. We got flamed bringing a platformer to the PC. We also got flamed for compatibility issues. And we got flamed for making a game starring a baby. And then they flamed me for hyping the technology we used. With my ass still smoking, I think I'll give *Messiah 2* a miss for a while.

When was the last time a computer game drove you to the brink of madness?
It was actually a game machine — the Sega Nomad. What the heck were they thinking making a handheld console that was *guaranteed* to run out of batteries before you could finish a game, and at the same time had *no* battery backup? Yes, it was endless fun trying to rush through a game while flying somewhere before the console packed in. ARGH!

What's the greatest moment in the history of gaming?
I was always an arcade fan — you know, *Pac-Man*, *Missile Command*, etc. But when I first climbed inside the *Star Wars* arcade machine and experienced real 3D gameplay, I was completely hooked. For me it was a major milestone — I *was* Luke Skywalker (well, erm, a taller version). I used to have to drive for 40 minutes just to get to the damn machine!

What's the optimal timeframe for the development cycle of a AAA game?
Eighteen months is how long it should take; thirty-six months is becoming a scary reality. So our goal is to make our new games in 24 months with the producer being allowed to carry live ammunition for the last six months. In the final month we'll give the programmers' home phone numbers to everyone that has pre-ordered the game. That should solve the problem.



"[Playing the Star Wars *coin-op*]...I was *Luke Skywalker. I was hooked.*"

Have you ever been arrested?
No, I'm sad to say. I tried when I was chased by the police once at close to 170mph, but it was a policewoman who finally caught me. I think she was an *Earthworm Jim* fan: she was cool and actually let me go with only a $70 fine instead of arresting me and impounding the car. Then she said she *had* to give me a fine because the other police knew about the chase. So it sounds like I need to hit about 200mph to get arrested. I'm gonna have to borrow a John Carmack car to get up there.

Violence in gaming: legitimate concern or media hysteria?
Ratings need to be real, and the problem is solved. I'm really happy that the stores are finally checking IDs. Why the heck has that taken so long? It's so bloody obvious. To expect us not to make games designed for adult use would be such an ass-backwards way of dealing with the problem. *Freddie the Fish* or *Quake III*, I ask you?

Are you still the tallest man in the industry?
It's a close one between Phil Harrison from Sony and myself. I have to wear lots of hair gel to beat him.

What do you have in your pockets right now?
Disney dollars, a *Sacrifice* dongle, a pocket knife, stupid amounts of keys, and a voice recorder. Voice recorders are the electronic whoopee cushion of the future — if you get creative, you can have a lot of fun with these things. The Disney dollars are fun if you meet a really pissy store clerk: just pull them out and try paying with them. Even the most PMS-ridden, job-hating person cracks a smile.

Online gaming: over-rated fad or inexorable future?
Big-time future...you better believe it. Wireless online gaming. I don't even care if the games suck: they'll seem a lot more fun than just sitting at the airport staring at the bald guy in front of you. (Or while your girlfriend's shopping.)

Why Shiny as the company name?
Shiny Entertainment was formed when the REM song "Shiny Happy People" was a big hit. It seemed like such a dumb name at the time, but it's become well-known in the industry. I did it as a joke and it stuck; now people take it really seriously. I get emails all the time from developers saying "It's my *dream* to be a Shiny member and have creative freedom like you guys do."

What game do you really wish somebody would make?
A "reality" world simulator like the one in the *Matrix*. But one where you're free to break the rules. It would be fascinating to see how it evolves — kinda like a massive version of the reality TV show *Survivor* with guns. Either that or a game that links to NASA's computers so I can fly the space shuttle around for real. I want to see if that *Armageddon* movie idea could actually work. PCG

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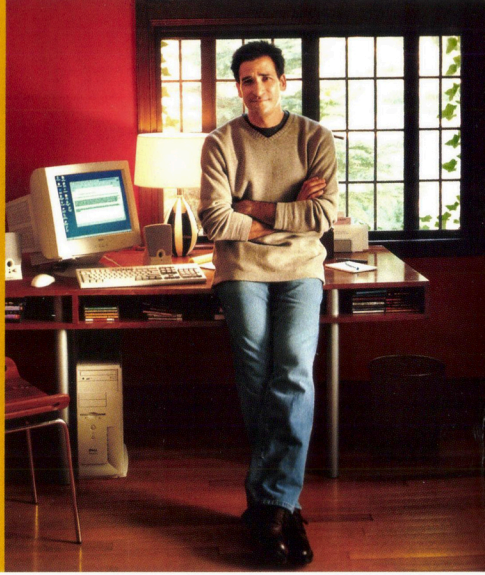
And so it was to be, forevermore. In a hell we could not possibly comprehend — and would never, never accept — we felt the purple pixels and jagged lines of damnation. Hideous anti-karma and asynchronous backlash from 10 lifetimes of wretched, craven lust was catching up with us. We would never escape, never know anything resembling even a speck of rest or exhalation. Oh, to be Sisyphus, Tantalus, Ixion, Spawn, or the blue-faced, three-armed boy...Or so we thought, for a moment of a moment of time, until we turned away — and saw Leisure Suit Larry, with the most bizarre smile...

a 1GHz processor? talk to me.

a $1699 price tag? now i'm listening.



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One Powerful PC

- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 1GHz
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- 19" (16.0" vis, .26dp) M991 Monitor
- 32MB NVIDIA TNT2 M64 4X AGP Graphics
- 8x/4x/32x CD-RW Drive
- SoundBlaster 64V PCI LC Sound Card
- Altec Lansing® ACS-340™ Speakers with Subwoofer
- V.90 56K Capable® PCI Telephony Modem for Windows®
- MS® Works Suite 2001 ■ MS® Windows® Me
- 3-Yr Limited Warranty[2] ■ 1-Yr At-Home Service[4]
- 1 Year of AOL® Membership Included**

$1699 E-VALUE CODE 89479-501116z

- Upgrade to Premier 1-Yr At-Home Service[4], add $99
- Epson® Stylus Color 777 Printer, add $99

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If you're the kind of person who thinks fast, eats fast and works fast, have we got a computer for you. The Dell™ Dimension™ 4100 desktop with, yes, a fast Intel® Pentium® III processor at 1GHz. It makes computing a snap. From crunching numbers to playing your favorite graphics-intensive games, the power of the 4100 will blow you away. And now it costs just $1699 including a CD-RW drive. Plus, it's backed by Dell's award-winning, around-the-clock service and support. Speed at a price you can afford—it's just another way Dell4me™ is helping you get what you're looking for. So contact Dell today by phone or on the Web. Ordering takes only a few minutes, which we know is a big deal for someone like you.

intel inside pentium® III

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DELL™ NOTEBOOKS:

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Design and Affordability

- Intel® Celeron™ Processor at 600MHz
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- 5GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- Modular 24X Max CD-ROM Drive
- 2X AGP 8MB ATI Rage Mobility™ -M1 3D® Video
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- Li-Ion Battery with ExpressCharge™ Technology
- MS® Works Suite 2001 ■ MS® Windows® Me
- 1-Yr Limited Warranty[2]
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AS LOW AS $37/MO., FOR 48 MOS.[17]

DELL™ INSPIRON™ 4000

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- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 600MHz Featuring Intel® SpeedStep™ Technology
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- 64MB 100MHz SDRAM
- 10GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- Modular 24X Max CD-ROM Drive
- 2X AGP 8MB ATI Rage Mobility™ 128 3D® Video
- Internal V.90 56K Capable[6] FaxModem
- 53WHr Li-Ion Battery with ExpressCharge™ Technology
- MS® Works Suite 2001 ■ MS® Windows® Me
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- 1 Year of AOL® Membership Included[40]

$1949 E-VALUE CODE 89480-801119b

AS LOW AS $53/MO., FOR 48 MOS.[17]

DELL™ INSPIRON™ 8000

NEW—Multimedia Mobile Desktop

- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 700MHz
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- 10GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- 8X Max DVD-ROM Drive
- 32MB AGP 4X ATI Rage Mobility™-M4 3D® Video
- Internal V.90 56K Capable[6] FaxModem
- 59WHr Li-Ion Battery
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- PC Speakers
- V.90 56K Capable[6] PCI DataFax Modem for Windows®
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$899 E-VALUE CODE 89480-501108

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- 20GB[5] Ultra ATA-100 Hard Drive
- 17" (16.0" vis, .26dp) M781s Monitor
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- 48X Max CD-ROM Drive
- SoundBlaster 64V PC LC Sound Card
- harman/kardon Speakers
- 3Com® V.90 56K Capable[6] PCI Telephony Modem
- MS® Works Suite 2001 ■ MS® Windows® Me
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$1199 E-VALUE CODE 89480-501111

AS LOW AS $33/MO., FOR 48 MOS.[17]

DELL™ DIMENSION™ 4100 Series

Advanced Performance, Smart Value

- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 933MHz
- 128MB SDRAM at 133MHz
- 20GB[5] Ultra ATA-100 Hard Drive
- 17" (16.0" vis, .26dp) M781s Monitor
- 32MB NVIDIA TNT2 M64 4X AGP Graphics
- 12X Max DVD-ROM Drive ■ SB Live! Value Digital
- harman/kardon Speakers with Subwoofer
- V.90 56K Capable[6] PCI Telephony Modem for Windows®
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- 8x/4x/32x CD-RW Drive
- Turtle Beach® Santa Cruz DSP Sound Card
- Altec Lansing® THX-Certified ADA 885™ Speakers with Subwoofer
- 3Com® V.90 56K Capable[6] PCI Telephony Modem
- MS® Works Suite 2001 ■ MS® Windows® Me
- 3-Yr Limited Warranty[2] ■ 1-Yr At-Home Service[4]
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intel inside pentium® III

Includes Windows Millennium Edition — the home version of the world's favorite software.

[40]**Must register for AOL within 30 days of receiving computer. To avoid paying monthly fees, cancel during 1st year promotional period. Even during promo period, telephone access charges on your phone bill (call your phone co. for details) and surcharges for premium services and 800# access may apply, including in AK.** For new, 18+ U.S. members with major credit card or checking account only. Limited time offer. [17]**Monthly payment based on 13.99% APR. APR FOR QUALIFIED CUSTOMERS. OFFER VARIES BY CREDITWORTHINESS OF CUSTOMER AS DETERMINED BY LENDER. Taxes and shipping charges extra. From American Investment Bank, N.A. to U.S. state residents (including D.C.) with approved credit. Availability may be limited in some states.**

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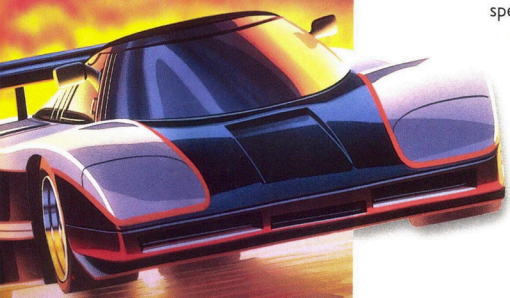

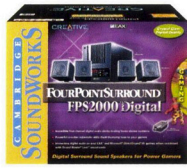

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